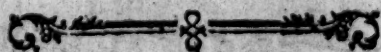


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HISTORICAL ACCOUNT
OF THE
1507/1304
RISE and PROGRESS
OF THE
SECESSION.

Wm. BY *Lees's*
Mr. JOHN BROWN,
Late Minister of the Gospel at HADDINGTON.

THE FIFTH EDITION.
With considerable New ENLARGEMENTS.



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An *Historical Account* of the *Rise* and *Progress* of the SECESSION.

THE connection of the *Secession* with former events, renders necessary, a rehearsal of a variety of facts, prior to the date of it. — Our Reformers not only published, but procured the establishment of the doctrines of Christ, maintained by Calvin, in their Confession of Faith: they also introduced his scriptural plan of Presbyterian church government; according to which, every minister has equal power: and according to which, the ecclesiastic courts of sessions, presbyteries, and synods are held of divine authority; and subordinated the former to the latter.

The great lines of this plan they marked out, in their first book of discipline: a more clear and distinct delineation thereof, they gave, in their second; which every minister among them was required to subscribe. An express parliamentary ratification of this form of church government, they, after no small struggling, at last obtained in 1592. In direct contradiction, however, to their second book of discipline, patronage was confirmed, and sundry other evils not fully abolished.

Quickly after, partly by fraud, partly by force, king James gradually pulled down the Presbyterian form of church government, and set up the Episcopalian in its stead. He assumed a spiritual headship over all persons and causes in the church. This, the parliament required many of the subjects to acknowledge by oath. The simple and scriptural form of worship, introduced by our reformers, he began to exchange for the superstitious one of the English. By his influence, a general assembly at Perth, chiefly composed of his own creatures, admitted the five subsequent articles, *viz.* kneeling at the Lord's supper; private administration of it to sick persons; private administration of baptism to distressed infants; confirmation of children, by the laying on of the hands of the bishop; and the annual celebration of five holy-days, commemorating the nativity, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, and the miraculous

descent of the Holy Ghost. These, from the place where they were enacted, are ordinarily termed, *the Articles of Perth*.

JAMES had not finished his intended modelling of our church, when death cut him off. His son Charles I. with the assistance of archbishop Laud, bestirred himself, to render her altogether *English*, or rather a little *more Romish*. Fired with indignation at the tyrannical imposition of half-popish canons and liturgy, many of all ranks in Scotland took the alarm. With the most bold, tho' patient struggling, they at last obtained the royal indication of a free assembly and parliament. The assembly meeting first in 1638, had plenty of rubbish to remove: The national covenant, sworn a little before, referred a vast deal of matter to their consideration. The six packed meetings of the general assembly, which assisted king James to deform the church, they annuled. The liturgy, the book of canons, and of ordination; the unlawful oaths of intrants to the curacy; the office of bishops; the high commission court; and civil offices of kirkmen, they condemned. The most active ring-leaders in the former apostacy, they censured. All the bishops were cited to their bar; and, notwithstanding of whatever themselves, or the king's commissioner could do, in their behalf, nine of them were excommunicated; three of them depose from all office in the church; two of them stepped from their Episcopal function, and suspended from the ministry. The assembly, moreover, referred kirk-sessions and synods, provincial and national, to the order prescribed in the second book of discipline; and revived or enacted a number of excellent rules for maintaining the order and purity of the church. They not only continued their meeting after the king's commissioner pretended to dissolve it; but expressly affirmed their divine, ecclesiastical, and civil authority, to hold general assemblies, whenever it is necessary. They nevertheless avowed, that the king, though a bigot for Prelacy, had power to call and convene such courts; and in case he called one next year, they agreed to desert the diet which themselves had fixed, and observe that, which his majesty should appoint.

This faithful assembly of Glasgow, king Charles proclaimed to be, after his commissioner's dissolution thereof, an unlawful and seditious meeting; nor did any of the reforming parliaments ever acknowledge its authority. The substance of its principal acts, the Assembly 1639 threw together into a new act, and softened some of the expressions. This the parliament 1640, explicitly ratified. They also revived the formentioned act of 1592, in all the points and articles thereof; and expressly declared, that the sole and only power and jurisdiction within this kirk, stands in her sessions, presbyteries, synods, and general assemblies. With one consent both church and state went forward, promoting reformation, and suppressing Popery, Prelacy, and profaneness; and prompted their neighbours in England and Ireland, to follow their example. The Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, with their Directory for worship, were ratified by both church and state. The Westminster *Form of church-government* was expressly received by the church; but never ratified by our state.

For eleven years of this reforming period, patronage retained its legal force; nay, by some acts, both church and state, directly or indirectly, approved it. Care was, however, taken, that no minister should be obtruded upon the Christian people against their will. In 1649, the parliament cleanly abolished it as a Popish custom, and an oppressive grievance to the people of God. In consequence hereof, the assembly that year framed a Directory for the election of ministers; which, it is presumed, ascribes to the session more power, than is allowed them, by the oracles of Christ.

Nothing so much distinguished our ancestors, as their public covenanting with God. Divinely assured, that, in the days of Moses, Joshua, Aza, Joash, Josiah, and Nehemiah, the Hebrews had, with his approbation, thus dedicated themselves and their seed to the Lord: Convinced, that public covenanting is no where, in the sacred page, represented as a ceremonial service, and so must be equally lawful under the New dispensation as under the Old: Convinced, that it was expressly pro-

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mised to take place under the gospel * ; and, with apostolic approbation, was probably practised in the Macedonian church † : Convinced, that if subjects, on proper occasions, may enter into a solemn association and bond, to promote the service, honour, and safety of their sovereign ; the professed subjects of Jesus Christ, may, in a social manner, devote themselves, to promote his interest and honour : Convinced, that if a number of purchasers at once may take out a charter for their property, wherein they constitute themselves and their heirs the vassals of a prince, duke, or lord ; there can be nothing unreasonable, if a number of men take hold of the everlasting covenant, and God in it, for their God, and the God of their seed ; and hereon devote themselves and posterity to be his honourable vassals and servants : Convinced, that if one man may solemnly devote himself to his Maker ; hundreds, nay, thousands, may do so together : Convinced, that if one, or more, may in baptism surrender his seed to the Lord, a whole nation may surrender their posterity to him ; — therefore, they did so in their public covenants. — Alway supposing such vows, good in their matter, plain in their form, seasonable in their juncture, and taken in truth, judgment, and righteousness, our ancestors were convinced, the three first precepts of the moral law approved thereof. The first requires us to avouch the Lord to be our God ; — why may not a number do this together ? The second enjoins our receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, the ordinances of God's worship ; — why may we not vow to be faithful to this trust, and to cleave to the Lord ? Especially, when the third requires us to *swear by his name*, and *vow to the mighty God of Jacob*.

Our ancestors knew, that the *seasons* of public covenanting, specified in scripture, were after signal deliverances ; amidst threatnings of sore trials and heavy judgments ; or, when earnestly endeavouring to withstand, or reform, from signal corruptions. They thought, the occasions whereon they practised it, tallied therewith. When the Popish powers abroad were forming their league to extirpate the Protestant cause, and its adhe-

* *Isa. lxx. 18, 21.*

† *2 Cor. viii. 5.*

rents; was it unseasonable for king James, and his council, prompted by the church, to set on foot the national covenant, or for the church to require the subscription thereof? When king Charles, archbishop Laud, and their creatures, combined to bury the pure worship of God, the Presbyterian form of church-government, and the civil liberties of the nation; was it unseasonable for the table of the nobles to set on foot the renovation of the national covenant; and stir up their brethren, to swear to maintain these valuable points?

With respect to the *matter* of their covenants, our fathers were ready to defy their adversaries, to show them any thing *renounced*, that was not prohibited by the divine law; or any thing *espoused*, that was not therein required. In 1580, and 1581, Popery in general, and in many particular heads, was abjured; and the Protestant religion, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, then professed, was sworn to. In 1590, an engagement to defend the king's person and authority, was subjoined. In 1596, they confessed their various sins, and engaged to walk more circumspectly for the future. In 1638, the maintainance of the true Protestant religion, and of king Charles, then a Prelatic persecutor, his civil authority; an opposition to Laud's canons and liturgy; and a forbearance of some novations, already introduced, till tried and allowed in a free general assembly: together with the leading of holy and exemplary lives; and the assistance and defence of one another, in fulfilling these vows,—were sworn to, and engaged. Episcopal government, the five articles of Perth, and the civil places and power of kirkmen, (whose lawfulness was left undetermined in the covenant 1638, in order that Episcopalians, as well as others, might take it), being condemned by the assembly that year, the covenant was afterward subscribed, as importing a renunciation of these novations.

In the solemn league, most of the Scots, and multitudes in England and Ireland, swore, in their places and callings, to endeavour the preservation of religion in Scotland, and the Reformation of it in England and Ireland, according to the word of God, and the example

of the best reformed churches ; and so promote an uniformity of religion in all the three kingdoms, that they and their children might live together in faith and love, and the Lord delight to dwell among them.

They engaged, in their respective stations, to endeavour the abolishing of Popery, Prelacy, superstition, heresy, schism, profaneness, or whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, and the power of godliness. They swore to promote the peace of the nation ; to support the authority of the king, and the privileges of the parliament ; and to promote union among themselves in prosecuting these laudable ends. — In 1648, the Scots, purged of many rotten-hearted professors, by the English defeat of duke Hamilton's engagement, undertaken in favour of king Charles I. made an extensive acknowledgment of their breaches of the solemn league: Error, heresy, schism, Independency, Anabaptism, Antinomianism, Familism, Libertinism, Scepticism, and Erastianism, then rampant in Britain, were abjured ; the maintenance of king Charles, still a strict Episcopalian, his authority, and of the liberties of both church and state, was engaged to. What thing *unlawful* is here espoused ? What thing *lawful* is here renounced ? What is here sworn to, that is not implied in the ordination-vows of every minister of the established church ? What, that is not implied in every candid adherence to the Westminster Confession of Faith ? What, that is not implied in every proper baptismal engagement ?

Whatever rigour they used, in imposing these covenants ; whatever allowance they gave any to swear them, who did not understand them, or who did not appear inclined to perform his vows, must never be justified. It is certain they were less culpable on these heads than many suppose. Notwithstanding of the compulsory laws, I scarce find an instance of any forced to take the covenants, except by Montrose and Monro, who were military men, and both of them at last noted enemies to the genuine covenanters. It is certain, multitudes took these covenants with chearfulness, knowledge, and candour ; and that surprising evidence of sobriety, and serious godliness, appeared among them ; prayerless and

profane persons, or families, were held as a detestable nuisance. Their very armies resembled a congregation of saints. Multitudes suffered to the death, for adhering to these vows, and died rejoicing in God their Saviour. Whom God thus honoured, let not us dare to calumniate as fools, and lavish of their lives.

The *ratification* of these covenants by the state, on some of the covenanting occasions, no doubt inferred a civil security of the religion therein espoused, even as the ratification of the Confession of Faith, and other subordinate standards, inferred a civil security to the Protestant religion therein exhibited. But as the latter makes not the Protestant religion a mere *state religion*; neither did the former render the covenants merely *state covenants*. In the *national*, the covenanters expressly declare, that therein they join themselves to the true Protestant church, *as lively members of the same in Christ their head*. Times without number, they represent their engagements *as covenants WITH GOD*, which necessarily infers their reckoning them *religious*, not *state covenants*, which cannot be made with God, without supposing a renovation of the Jewish Theocracy, in which God sustained the character of principal Magistrate. In 1596, and 1638, the most noted occasions of covenanting, they were not so much as influenced by the smallest injunction from the state. In 1643, and 1648, the other two most remarkable seasons thereof, the ecclesiastical authority had the lead, and the civil did little else than add its sanction to what appointments the church had made. And in every period, ministers, not statesmen, were the ordinary administrators of these oaths.

In this covenanting work, they never intended a *mere acknowledgment of the obligation of the divine law*, with respect to the duties contained in their covenant: but a *more strict binding of themselves to these necessary duties, by a new and superadded obligation*. An obligation not increasing the original obligation of the divine law to these duties, but one entirely distinct from, and superadded thereto. In this view, have all nations of mankind in all ages, made use of secondary obligations of promises, bonds, vows, promissary oaths, as means of more

deeply impressing the original mandates of the law of nature or revelation, by the constitution of a new, and solemn, and distinct obligation, which cannot be violated, without superadding the new and distinct crimes of fidelity, treachery, and perjury, to that of rebellion against, and disobedience to, the original requirement of the moral law. The obligation of the divine law to perform the duties contained in the covenants was the same thousands of years ere they were thought of, and would have been the same, suppose they had never been thought of, and is entirely *divine*. The law of God warrants the constitution of the obligation of lawful covenants to duty; and when it is constituted, requires the fulfilment thereof; and enforces the same with a divine sanction of rewards, in case of fulfilment, and of punishment, in case of breach. But this obligation, and which alone is *the obligation of the covenant*, hath no existence before the first covenanting act, and is constituted by it. The divine obligation of the moral law extends equally to all men. The obligation of covenants being constituted by a human act, in obedience to the law of God, extends only to such as either immediately or mediately engage in those covenants *, and relates only to this imperfect state.

That the obligation of the national covenant and solemn league is perpetual, binding the whole nation, in this and succeeding ages, is evident.

1. The things covenanted are duties required in the law of God; and so it cannot but be for the honour of God, and the good of the nation, and every person therein, they be perpetually observed.

2. These covenants were public deeds of our fathers, who had power to dedicate us to the Lord, in that manner, as well as in baptism. And from God's antient grant of the nation to his Son, Psal. ii. 8. Isa. xlii. 4. &c they had strong encouragement to do so. The covenanting work in Scotland was so often repeated, and on some occasions, particularly in 1638, so universal, that it is scarce probable there is a Scotch family on the

* See the Synod's Catechism on the third command.

continent, which is not descended from some covenant-ter †.

3. These covenants were public deeds of the representatives of both church and state, acquiesced in by the subjects, and so *as binding*, as the covenant of Israel with the Gibeonites, which was only sworn by the princes of the congregation, Judg. ix. and yet continued binding on the whole nation four hundred years afterward, 1 Sam. xxi.

4. These covenants were public deeds of the body of the adult members in both church and state, and often repeated and ratified by the supreme authority of both, and so binding upon the whole church and nation, and their posterity after them, Deut. v. 2, 3. and xxix. 1,—15.* Even the public curse imprecated by the Jews met at the passover, Mat. xxvii. 25, hath affected their whole nation and their posterity. Without supposing that public covenants of parents, and of representatives of church or state, or of the greater part of a society, were binding on their descendants, the body represented, the whole society, and such as accede thereto, there could be no dependance on public covenants and treaties in, or between societies. Whenever the immediate covenanters, or often a few of them, died, or lost their power, the obligation of the treaties would be voided, and so all things kept in confusion.

Twelve years of reformation were scarce elapsed, when all the above advances therein began to be plucked up

† See Rapin, vol. 2. fol. 203. Hume's hist. on ann. 1638. p. m. 257. Neal's hist. Puritans, vol. 2. p. m. 259, 260, 261. Dickson, Henderson, and Cant's answers to, and replies of, doctors of Aberdeen, p. 4, 40, 44. 77, 97. Spang's *Historia motuum*, p. 60. Brown's apologetical relation, p. 48. Hind let loose, p. 77, 514,—520. Livingston's life, p. 22. Bishop Guthrie's memoirs, p. 35. Stevenson's hist. vol. 2. p. 291,—697, 311, 445. Willison's Testimony. p. 7. Wilson's Defence, p. 240,—243. Crookshank's hist. vol. 1. p. 33.

* For proof of the perpetual obligation of these covenants, see Timorcus Covenanters's plea, Croft's Fastening of Peter's fetters, Hind let loose, p. 514,—520. Brown's apologetical relation, p. 37,—414—See also Brown's letter on the perpetual obligation of the Scotch covenants, Walker's sermon, both lately published.

by the roots. To support king Charles II. against Cromwell, but contrary to solemn engagements, wicked malignants were received into places of power and trust. By this both church and state were thrown into fearful disorders. Those of the general assembly, who countenanced this promiscuous admission, were called *Resolutioners*; these who warmly opposed, it, were designed the *Protesters*. The nation was overspread, and torn asunder, by the warmest animosity, and the mutual censures, betwixt them. Cromwell having routed their king, and forced him to flee the country, restricted both parties.

When Charles II. was restored to his kingdom, *anno* 1660, he, and host of his subjects, profanely trampled on their solemn vows. Zealously, and at no small expence, had the covenanters supported his interest, and promoted his restoration: Destruction and ruin were their only reward. Their covenanted reformation, from 1637, to 1650, was declared null and void; and much of it, rebellious and treasonable. Their covenants were declared unlawful, and not binding on the swearers; many of the subjects were obliged solemnly to renounce them, as such; by order of authority, they were publicly burnt; and it was declared treasonable, to give or take them. Episcopacy was restored and advanced. The king was declared supreme head of the church in all causes, to whom the ordering of her whole external government did solely belong, as an inherent right of his crown. By oaths, declarations, or tests, the subjects were required to justify these odious crimes. Such as faithfully opposed, were fined, imprisoned, tortured, banished, or murdered, under, and without colour of law. At the very beginning, about two thirds of the ministry complied with the court. Not a few others, too cowardly, deserted their judicatures and flocks: many accepted of an indulgence to preach, flowing from Charles's supremacy, and hampered with sinful restrictions, as, that they should not meddle with the sovereign's spiritual headship; should not marry, or admit to the seals of the covenant, any who

resided in the congregations of curates, unless attested by them; should either attend the Prelatic courts, or confine themselves to their own parish, &c. They afterward thanked the duke of York for his toleration, clearly founded on his claim to absolute power, and calculated to introduce the whole delusion, idolatry, and tyranny of Antichrist.

In 1688, when James and his agents were just going to wreathe the yoke of Popery and slavery about our necks, God ejected him from his throne, and crushed his designs. The parliament which met thereafter, abolished Prelacy, the king's supremacy in ecclesiastic affairs, the Yule vacance, together with the persecuting acts of the preceding period. Its wicked oaths and declarations, they discharged; and, in room thereof, appointed a simple oath of allegiance, and a solemn declaration of fidelity to our sovereign king William. They revived and confirmed all former laws, in so far as against Popery, and for the maintainence of the true reformed Protestant religion. They ratified the Westminster Confession of faith, and engrossed it into their act. They ratified and confirmed Presbyterian church-government and discipline, as agreeable to the word of God, and most conducive to the advancement of true piety and godliness, and the establishing of peace and tranquillity within this realm. They revived the 114th act of the Parl. 1592, in so far as it established the same; and rescinded all acts and laws in so far as contrary to said Protestant religion, and Presbyterian government and discipline. The government of the church they lodged in the hands of such ministers as had been ejected for opposing Prelacy. They abolished patronage; but lodged the election of ministers in the hand of heritors and elders, with the consent of the congregation. They made a variety of excellent acts against profaneness and blasphemy. Queen Anne's first parliament further ratified the true Protestant religion, together with the worship, discipline, and government of this church; and declared the unalterable continuance thereof, an *essential* and *fundamental* condition of the union, in all time coming.

In 1690, the general assembly spent the first day of their meeting in solemn fasting, and lamenting over the sins of the land. The former assemblies concerned in the above-mentioned public resolutions, were given up to oblivion. Whatever censures the Resolutioners or Protesters had passed upon one another, were declared null and void. In the act for a national fast, a multitude of the abominations of the persecuting period were condemned and lamented. The parliament's settlement of religion was acquiesced in, without any complaint. In the acts of this, and other subsequent assemblies, we find a variety of occasional hints, implying an acknowledgement of the authority of the general assemblies from 1638, to 1650. Till after 1710, especially in acts for fasting, we find frequent hints of the binding obligation of our covenants. In the commission's *Seasonable Admonition*, ratified by the assembly 1699, and in some acts of following assemblies*, we have as full an assertion of Christ's sole headship over his church; of her intrinsic power; and of the divine right of Presbyterian government; as can be met with, in the records of this church. In 1706, the commission remonstrated against subjecting the nation, in any degree, to the authority of the English bishops, as spiritual lords in the British parliament; and against making the confirmation of Prelacy in England, an essential condition of the union. In 1711, the commission, and in 1715, the assembly, warmly remonstrated against the British parliament, their granting a toleration to all sects, except Papists and blasphemers; and against their restoring of patronage.

King William and his managers were far enough from being hearty friends to a covenanted reformation, or willing to allow of the ejection of loyal episcopalian clergy, whose lives were tolerable. For fear of provoking him and his agents, to oppose or subvert the establishment of Presbyterian government and discipline, the principal promoters of the Revolution, minced matters, as far as

* *Admon. p. 5. Ass. 1705. act 7. 16. Ass. 1707. act 11. Ass. 1711. act 10.*

their consciences would permit. Hence, a number of well-disposed persons in the revolution church, thought the procedure of both parliament and assembly defective. Considering the horrid wickedness of the persecuting period, they were displeased the threefold representation of grievances, especially that by Mr Shields and his brethren, presented to the assembly 1690, was refused to be read or considered; that the wicked oaths, acts, indulgencies, and persecution, and other evils of that period, were not more fully and plainly condemned, and the testimonies of the martyrs against them, clearly approved. Considering the indignity done to the work of reformation, between 1638 and 1650, they were persuaded it ought not to have been so much overlooked, or left under any slur, but solemnly and plainly approved. Considering what daring indignity had of late been done thereto, they thought the sole headship of Christ over his church, together with her intrinsic power, and the divine right of Presbytery, should have been more early, and still more solemnly asserted, in acts made for that very purpose. They were grieved, that our covenants were not more solemnly and particularly approved, and their obligation upon posterity more fully asserted and evinced; and that no steps were taken towards the renovation thereof. They were offended, that noted persecutors possessed civil places of power and trust, and were so easily admitted to sealing ordinances, and even to the office of elders in the church:—offended, that the bishops early flight to England, and the favour of some great men, screened them from church censure; and that many curates were admitted by the church into ministerial fellowship, without any *express* renunciation of abjured Prelacy, or profession of sorrow for the compliance with it. They were offended, that the meetings of the general assembly were so tamely dissolved, or propagated, at the will of king William or queen Anne.

It is easy to see, that such persons would heartily detest the parliament's consenting to the confirmation of Prelacy in England, as an essential condition of the union; and reckon it contrary to scripture, and a plain bu-

rial of the solemn league, wherein we are engaged to endeavour the reformation of England from Prelacy : — would be grieved with the introduction from England, of the abjuration-oath, as a qualification for civil offices ; of custom-house oaths ; of unnecessary repetition of oaths ; of superstitious swearing by touching and kissing the gospels ; and of Scotchmens receiving the Lord's supper in the English manner, as a qualification for civil offices, while serving the sovereign in England ; and with the parliament's restoration of patronage, and the superstitious Yule vacance of our civil courts ; and with their granting an almost unlimited toleration. But it was the imposition of the abjuration-oath, especially upon the ministry, which then occasioned the most mournful offence and division in the church. Every true Presbyterian heartily abhorred Popery, and detested the Pretender for its sake : but knowing that God had expressly prohibited the taking of his name **IN VAIN**, and that he will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name **IN VAIN**, *Exod. xx. 7.* ; — that forwardness in swearing oaths is marked as part of a wicked man's character, *Eccl. ix. 2.* and great caution therein as part of the character of a saint, *Gen. xxiv. 2, — 9.* Knowing that every oath ought to be for confirmation, to make an end of strife, *Heb. vi. 16.* and so ought, as far as the terms can admit, to be taken in the sense of the imposer ; — that it ought to be sworn in *truth*, and in *judgment*, and in *righteousness*, *Jer. iv. 2.* and with a single eye to the glory of God, *1 Cor. x. 31.* Knowing that we in this land can take no oath contrary to our public covenants, the national and solemn league, wherein we abjure Popery, Prelacy, superstitious ceremonies, Erastianism, schism, &c. without involving ourselves in the most fearful perjury ; — many truly loyal, judicious, and godly ministers and Christians scrupled at taking it, or even at joining in church-fellowship with these ministers who took it. Besides other objections,

1. They thought that oath **UNNECESSARY**, and so a taking of the name of the Lord their God **IN VAIN** ; — as every thing lawful therein contained, is just the

moment before sworn in the ALLEGIANCE, and solemnly engaged to in the ASSURANCE. It moreover appeared to them, that this oath was of no use to exclude treacherous Jacobites, from places of power or trust, or to secure the Protestant succession in the family of Hanover.—The imposition of it both in 1702 and 1711 being chiefly owing to Jacobitical influence; and none make less scruple to take it, than most of the Jacobites.

2. Notwithstanding the Jurants being obliged, to profess, upon oath, that every word in it has a *plain and common sense*, in which they swear they take it, *without any secret reservation whatsoever*, they found in it several expressions, which they deemed *unsafe*; as to swear the sovereign to be **LAWFUL** and **RIGHTFUL** king of **ALL** the dominions and countries belonging to great Britain; as they hardly knew what countries Britain claimed; or the lawfulness of her claim to some of them; nay, suspected her claim to some of them to be merely founded on treachery and violence:—to swear they would to the utmost of their power, defend the sovereign against all attempts which should be made against his **DIGNITY**, which they were certain in, the original form of the oath, included his spiritual headship over the church, as well as his civil supremacy; and in most part of his dominions certainly retains the same signification; nor hath it ever been declared, that it hath not that signification; when the oath is sworn in Scotland:—and to swear they will do their best endeavours to disclose **ALL TREASON**, *i. e.* whatever was declared treason by the Scotch, English, and British laws; when they had scarce access to examine all these laws, and were scarce satisfied that every thing they declared *treasonable* was really so.

3. As the parliament of England, in their original imposition of this oath, had expressly declared, that one end thereof was the *perpetual maintenance of the church of England, as by law established*, *i. e.* as corrupted with Popish Prelacy and ceremonies.—And in this oath, the jurant swears, that he will to the uttermost of his power, maintain the limitation and succession of the British

crown AS it is, or WHICH stands limited by an English act, which expressly require the sovereign to *be of the church of England, and to swear to maintain her as by law established*;—they thought the oath engaged them indirectly to support Prelacy and the ceremonies in England, and to endeavour to shut up the king to swear a sinful oath, and practise unlawful church-fellowship as a condition of enjoying his royal powers and privileges.—This they looked upon as contrary to scripture, 1 Thess. v. 22. Eph. v. 11. Col. ii. 20, 21. Luke xxii. 24,—27.; and expressly contrary to our covenants, whereby Prelacy and ceremonies, whether in Scotland or England, are abjured as sinful, and to be extirpated. Many even thought, that a swearing to maintain the succession of the crown against all others, to *heirs of the body of Sophia* upon the simple condition of their *being Protestants*, was unlawful, as being contrary to some fundamental laws of the kingdom; and as it might, in a variety of supposable cases, involve the adherent to this oath, in unreasonable conduct.

4. When they judged the swearing of this oath an unnecessary taking of God's name in vain; when they looked on the above and other expressions of it as obscure or unsafe; when they looked on it, as including an engagement to the indirect and mediate maintainance of Prelacy, and the ceremonies in England; and when they moreover knew, that contrary to manifold laws of God, Lev. xix. 14. Deut. xxvii. 18. Rom. xiv. 13,—22. and xv. 1,—3. 1 Cor. x. 23. 31,—33. and viii. 9,—13. Rom. xvi. 17, 18. Mat. xviii. 6, 7. they would, in taking it, lay stumbling-blocks in the way of others; encourage or harden some in taking it rashly and ignorantly in the too common manner; or, in taking frequently, perhaps several times in one day or week, to qualify them for different offices in the state; or give occasion to contention, schism, evil-speaking, and mutual reviling in the societies wherewith they are connected,—they could not allow themselves, for fear of any human penalty, to take it HEARTILY and WILLINGLY, as every jurant has to swear he doth.—To these reasons,

a variety of answers were published; but destitute of that candour or clearness, necessary to satisfy a duly tender and well-informed conscience, in the awful and solemn point of an oath.

While the affair of the abjuration-oath continued rending the church, Mr John Simson, professor of divinity at Glasgow, in his defences to the assembly, against Mr James Webster, maintained,—That Heathens have an implicit discovery of redemption through Christ: that if they, or others, with such moral seriousness, as they are by nature capable of, use the means of happiness they have, they shall certainly obtain saving grace, and eternal felicity: that all infants have their souls formed as pure and holy as Adam's was, and dying in nonage, shall probably be saved: that no proper covenant of works was made with Adam, as the representative of his posterity: that our own happiness ought to be our chief end in the service of God: that there is no immediate precourse of God attending, and influencing the acts of his reasonable creatures: and that there will be no sinning in hell after the last judgment. — After tedious altercations, at various meetings, the assembly 1717 found these positions no more, but *opinions not necessary to be taught in divinity; opinions not evidently founded in scripture, and some of them tending to attribute too much to the power of corrupt nature*: and they discharged him, or any other under their inspection, to propagate them.

That very day, however, they condemned, as *most unsound and detestable*, this proposition, *That it is unsound to teach, We must forsake our sin in order to come to Christ; and to enstating us in covenant with God.* This was thought, a plain affirming, That we ought to forsake our sin, saving ourselves from the love, power, and practice thereof, before we come to Christ, as the only Saviour; or have any interest in his new-covenant blessing. To give a check to this, and other legal errors, then too rampant, a noted English treatise, entitled, *The Marrow of modern divinity*, was republished, with a recommendatory preface by Mr. James Hog, one of

the holiest ministers in the kingdom. For about eighty years, this treatise had maintained a considerable character with the serious : Now, the assembly 1720, many of whose members, it was shrewdly suspected had never much, if at all, perused it, condemned a great number of passages therein, and charged ministers to warn their people against reading it. In this hasty attack, they too plainly condemned the offering of Christ as a Saviour to *all men*, or to men *as sinners* ; and the maintaining, That believers are fully delivered from the commanding and condemning power of the law as a covenant of works. They too plainly asserted our holiness to be a federal, or conditional means of our obtaining everlasting happiness ; and that slavish fear of endless misery, and legal hope of future blessedness, ought to influence the saints in their study of gospel-holiness.— These almost entirely scriptural expressions, that believers *are not under the law*, and do not commit sin ; that the Lord sees no sin in them, and cannot be angry with them ; they declared Antinomian paradoxes. The distinction of the moral law into the forms of a covenant, and of a rule of duty in the hand of Christ, used in order to explain these expressions, they utterly condemned. Mess. Thomas Bolton, Ebenezer and Ralph Erskines, with nine others, remonstrated against this decision ; and in their answers to the commission's twelve queries, with no small evidence elucidated the truth. The assembly 1722, resumed the affair, rebuked the twelve Representatives, for some expressions in their representation, and made an act explaining and confirming the acts of 1720, relative thereto. This, though not so gross as the former, the representing brethren protested against, as *injurious to truth* ; but the assembly refused to mark their protest. Not a few ministers, in order to avoid the most distant appearance of favouring the MARROW, seeming to become more legal in their doctrine than formerly, great numbers of serious Christians, crowded after the Representatives, and their friends. These notwithstanding of their distinguished holiness of practice, and zealous recommending of it to their hearers, were exceed-

ingly traduced, as new schemers, and Antinomian encouragers of a licentious life.

Probably, their reproach and trouble had been more extensive, had not a flagrant report spread abroad, that Mr John Simson not only contemned the assembly's prohibition, and taught his forementioned errors; but had taught,—That Jesus Christ is not necessarily existent: that the persons in the Godhead are not the very same in substance: that *necessary existence, supreme Deity*, and being the *only true God*, may be taken in a sense importing the personal property of the Father, and so not belonging to the Son and Holy Ghost.—The teaching of these Arian tenets was sufficiently proven against him. But to the assembly he presented declarations in orthodox language; and, after much quibbling, professed his sorrow, for some of the offensive expressions that were proven against him. When the process had continued more than two years, the assembly 1728 suspended him from the exercise of all ecclesiastical function, till another assembly should think fit to take off the sentence. The assembly 1729 further declared, that it was not proper to intrust him any more with the training up of young men for the holy ministry. The libel relative to his continuing to teach his former errors, was fully proven; but left undiscussed. Many were offended, that his blasphemy and error were so slightly censured.

Not long after, Mr Campbell, professor of church-history in the university of St. Andrews, in his printed tracts, ridiculed close walking with God, and consulting him in all our ways, as *enthusiasm*. He averred that, in the interval between Christ's death and resurrection, his disciples looked upon him as a downright impostor. He maintained, that self-love is the chief motive, and standard of all actions, religious or virtuous. He asserted, that the existence of God, and the immortality of the soul, cannot be known by the light of nature: and that the laws of nature are a certain and sufficient rule to direct rational minds to happiness; and our observation thereof, the great means of our real and lasting felicity.—These he so varnished over, in his de-

fences, that he never was censured on account of them. This added to the former offence.

The male-administration of church-government was now become notorious and glaring. For about thirteen years after queen Anne had restored patronage, none accepted the presentation, unless he had the call or consent of the Christian people. The British parliament, in 1719, expressly declared, that unless the candidate accepted, the presentation was null. How easily then might the church have restrained her candidates from accepting! But it was, and is more and more otherwise. During Mr. Simson's last process, the violent intrusion of presentees upon reclaiming congregations began. To cut off standing testimonies against their own sinful conduct, the assembly 1730, by an express act discharged marking the reasons of any protest or dissent, in their minutes. Nay, in this and some subsequent assemblies, it became fashionable, to refuse to record the dissents or protests themselves. Against this, and other growing defections, about forty ministers, and sixteen hundred people, presented a warm remonstrance to the assembly 1732, and begged a judicial assertion of truth, in opposition to Mr Simson's errors. These representations, the assembly refused to hear: and, contrary to instruction from the far greater part of presbyteries, which sent any, they enacted, That Protestant heritors, whether Prelatic Jacobites or not, and elders, should be sole electors of gospel ministers. This act was reckoned an overturning of Christ's spiritual kingdom, in his own name; and a robbing his people of their spiritual privilege, under pretence of his authority. Next assembly, under pain of the highest censure, prohibited the presbytery of Dunfermline, and by consequence every other, to allow sealing ordinances to such, whose conscience could not submit to the ministry of a presentee, violently obtruded on them. According to this, many behaved either to trample on their conscience, and the Christian law, or to be held as Heathen men and publicans.

Mean while, Mr. Ebenezer Erskine, in a sermon before the synod at Perth, October 1732, decried patro-

nage, and the assembly's above-mentioned act, relative to the election of ministers, and some other prevalent courses of defection. After three days of warm disputation, the synod ordered him to be rebuked at their bar, for the *matter* and *manner* of his sermon. Twelve ministers and two elders dissented. Himself appealed to the ensuing general assembly. But instead of redress, that supreme judicature appointed him to receive a rebuke at their bar. Conceiving, the truths of God affirmed in his sermon, were hereby injured, he protested, That without violating his conscience, he could not submit; and that he should be at liberty to give a like testimony on every proper occasion. For their own exoneration, Mess. William Wilson, Alexander Moncrieff, and James Fisher, adhered to his protest. Without allowing these four brethren to attempt a defence of their conduct, the assembly appointed their commission to proceed against them, in August next, by suspension, or higher censure, if they did not retract their protest, and profess their sorrow for taking it. In August, being hardly permitted to declare their mind, and still adhering to their protest, they were suspended from the exercise of their office. In November, the commission, still finding them impenitent, did, by their moderator's casting vote, loose their ministerial relation to their respective congregations. These four brethren protested, that their office, and their relation to their congregations, should be held as valid, as if no such sentence had been passed; and they declared a SECESSION, not from the *constitution* of the church of Scotland, but from the *prevailing party in her judicatures*.

That they might regularly adhere to their principles, and afford relief to such as were oppressed with intrusions, they quickly after, with prayer and fastings, constituted themselves into an ecclesiastical court, which they termed, *The Associate Presbytery*. Their minutes bear, That Mess. Wilson and Moncrieff, soon after, framed their first testimony to the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the church of Scotland; and that this was judicially approved 1734, in their meetings at

Colfargy and Dunfermline. Herein they exhibit their reasons of secession, and which readers ought carefully to observe, viz.

1. That the *prevailing party*, in the established judicatures, *were breaking down the Presbyterian constitution of church government*, by their trampling upon, and making decisions in an order quite contrary to that prescribed in the *barrier acts* of this church, in her purest times, enacted to secure due deliberation, in the appointment of standing laws, and general rules, by their exercising a lordly power over the consciences of Christians, empowering heritors and elders to impose on them their spiritual guides; by their promoting the violent intrusions of presentees upon reclaiming congregations; by their censuring and ejecting ministers, merely for protesting against a sinful act of the general-assembly; by their allowing the commission to take into their own hand the presbytery's power in settling a pastor, if the expelling a violent intrusion was by the presbytery refused; and by their threatening the highest censure to those who administered sealing ordinances to such as could not, in conscience, submit to the ministry of intruders.

2. That said prevailing party *were pursuing such methods, as had an evident tendency to corrupt the doctrines of truth, contained in their own Confession of Faith*; in their so easily dismissing the process relative to professor Simson, and refusing judicially to assert the truth in opposition to his errors; in their caressing professor Campbell, while he spread his erroneous tenets; and finally, in their permitting or encouraging preachers, to entertain their hearers with dry harangues, of almost mere heathen morality, instead of the gospel of Christ.

3. That they *were imposing upon ministers sinful terms of communion*, even the breach of their ordination-vows, in forbearing a proper opposition to the prevalent course of apostacy from the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this church.

3. That they *were continuing in those evil ways, notwithstanding of the use of ordinary means to reclaim them*. And which LAST they took, as bringing the matter to

a crisis, leaving no probable view of redress, but in a way of Separation. — In this Testimony, the seceding brethren, as on many other occasions, declared their zealous adherence to their ordination-vows, and to every subordinate *standard* espoused in their mother church. They likewise avowed their intention to maintain church-fellowship, with all these of her ministers, or members, who faithfully opposed, and groaned under the prevailing course of defection, as opportunity should permit.

In 1734, the assembly was very different from some of the preceding. The better part had vigorously beset themselves in the choice of the members. Sundry corrupt and tyrannical courses received an observable check. The synod of Perth was appointed to repon the seceding brethren to their respective charges: but as this appointment represented the reposition as effected, without condemning the act of the preceding assembly, or the conduct of their commission, these brethren accounted it an act of favour, rather than of justice; and so deemed the truths which suffered along with them, not duly vindicated. Hence they forebore returning to the established judicatures, upon such a foundation. They published the reasons of their conduct, and the terms upon which they were willing to accede to the judicatories. About two years and a half, however, they kept their meetings of presbytery, for almost nothing but prayer and conference; waiting, and wishing for an opportunity of an untainted return.

But observing the established judicatures fast relapsing into, or proceeding forward in, their former defection;—observing, that professor Campbell's sentiment of self-love being the great standard and motive of all actions, religious and moral, as varnished over by him, was inconsiderately approved by the assembly 1736; and observing, that the excellent acts of that assembly *against intrusions, or for orthodox preaching*, were generally disregarded;—they began to supply with sermon such oppressed Christians as petitioned for it: and Mr. Wilson was appointed to educate students for the work of the ministry in connexion with them. Mean while, Mess.

Ralph Erskine and Thomas Mair, ministers, acceded to the Associate Presbytery, declaring, that they joined them, not as different from, but as a part of the church of Scotland, witnessing against the corruption of the prevailing party in her established judicatures; that they intended no withdrawment from such godly brethren, in the ministry, as were groaning under, and wrestling against the then prevailing course of backsliding; and that they resolved to return to the above-mentioned judicatories, whenever these returned to their duty.— This form of secession the Associate Presbytery cheerfully acquiesced in; and declared to be, in effect, the same with their own.

About the same time, the Associate Presbytery published a SECOND TESTIMONY *to the doctrine, worship, government, and discipline of the church of Scotland*. It was not designed to state the grounds of secession;—for the defections of the prelatie persecutors, and the civil government, from neither of which they made their secession, were therein rehearsed and condemned;—but was designed and calculated to represent the grounds of the Lord's controversy with the generation; calculated to give a judicial approbation of former steps of reformation, and to condemn the steps of apostacy therefrom; and to condemn the prevalent errors of the time, and expressly assert the truth, in direct opposition thereto.

In this testimony, they marked out and condemned the leading defections of both church and state, from 1650, when the apostacy remarkably began, to 1736. They expressly condemned the errors of professors Simson and Campbell; and shewed their contrariety to the word of God, and the standards of this church. Solemnly they asserted, That the Old and New Testaments are not merely a *sufficient*, and the *principal*, but the ONLY RULE to direct us, how to glorify God, and enjoy him: That Jesus Christ is the supreme, the only true God; the same in substance and dignity with his eternal Father: That God from all eternity decreed all things according to the counsel of his own will; and elected certain number of mankind to everlasting life,

mere good pleasure, without any regard to their future good works, as the condition or ground of his choice: That God entered into a covenant of life, upon condition of perfect obedience, with Adam as the representative of his natural seed: That by Adam's breach of that covenant, in eating the forbidden fruit, all men are conceived and born in sin; are by nature children of disobedience and wrath; and can do nothing spiritually good: That though there be no *necessary* connexion between the natural seriousness of unregenerate men, and their obtaining saving grace; yet it is their duty, carefully to attend the ordinances of the gospel, as the means whereby God conveys his converting Spirit and influence: That the light of nature is not sufficient to guide fallen men, to any true or lasting happiness: That Christ assumed our nature; is very God, and very man, in two distinct natures, and one person for ever: That he, as Surety, undertook for all the elect, and them only, and gave to the law and justice of God whatever obedience and satisfaction they could require of us: That his surety-righteousness, imputed to us, is the only foundation, of our forgiveness of sin, acceptance into favour with God, and title to eternal life, and not any thing wrought in, or done by us: That want of conformity to God's law, in heart or life, is truly and properly sin: and that sinning and suffering will be the misery of the damned in hell through eternity: That all believers in Christ are fully delivered from the moral law as a covenant of works, so as to be thereby neither justified nor condemned; but are for ever under us, as a binding rule of obedience, given by JEHOVAH the Creator and Redeemer of man: That God needs nothing from, nor can be profited by any creature; and therefore rewards their good actions, merely of his own free-will, and gracious bounty: that not self-interest, or pleasure, but the holy law of God, is the supreme and sole standard of all actions, religious, or moral: That not self-love, but a view of the glorious excellencies of God, as revealed in Christ, and a kindly regard to his authority, are the leading motives of our love and obedience to him: That

no believer can ever totally or finally fall away from his state of grace ; nor did Christ's disciples, while he was in the grave, account him a downright impostor : That Jesus Christ *alone* is the king and head of his church ; to whom *alone* it belongs to give unto her, laws, ordinances, and officers ; and to whom *alone* her officers are subject in their spiritual ministrations : That Christ hath in his word prescribed a particular form of government for his church, distinct from, and not subordinate to, the civil magistrate : That the form of government appointed by him to continue in his New-Testament church till his second coming, is the Presbyterian, according to which there is no office above that of a Pastor ; and congregational sessions, consisting of a minister or ministers, elders and deacons, are subordinated to presbyteries, or classes, and these to synods ; and no other, Independant, Episcopalian, or Erastian : That Christ hath intrusted this government, not to all church members, but to office bearers, whose power is entirely subordinated to the laws declared in his word : That these officers have power and warrant from Christ, to hold general assemblies, and other ecclesiastic courts, as often as is necessary for the good of the church : That Christ's kingdom, being of a *spiritual* nature, the ministers, and other officers thereof, ought to be set over congregations, by the call and consent of such therein, as are admitted to full communion, in all her sealing ordinances, *no person's vote being preferred upon any SECULAR account.*

Along with this assertory declaration of truth, they condemned and declared their detestation of the contrary error.—They professed their hearty adherence to the Westminster Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, Directory for worship, and Form of church-government. They declared their adherence to the National Covenant, as explained to abjure Prelacy, the civil places and power of kirkmen, and the articles of Perth ; and to the Solemn League and Covenant of the three kingdoms ; and to every act of assembly, or other testimony ; in so far as calculated to promote or

maintain their fathers covenanted work of reformation. — And, finally, they in their judicative capacity, declared their adherence to the Representations, presented by them to the commission of 1733. to their first Testimony; and to their Reasons of not-acceding to the judicatories of the established church: and so made those papers as really parts of this testimony, as if they had been wholly ingrossed therein.*

This testimony, as Mr Wilson, its principal drawer and defendant, observes, was never intended for a *new standard*, but for a public adherence to such as had been long acknowledged by the nation. The extent of it, especially when considered as comprehending the three pamphlets just now mentioned, made it very unfit to be adopted as an ecclesiastical standard. Persons, however, who acceded to, or joined with the seceding brethren, commonly professed their approbation thereof, *so far as they understood it*: but, it must not be imagined, they were required to believe the real certainty of every narrative of fact therein contained. To have demanded a religious adherence to narrations of fact, depending entirely on the testimony of fallible historians, would have been Antichristian tyranny. Knowing the hundreds and thousands of mistakes, observed in the most noted histories; knowing the ignorance and fallibility of mankind; the seceding ministers abhorred the thought of having their followers faith to stand in the wisdom or authority of men; and not wholly in the wisdom, power, and veracity of God. Mr. Wilson openly averred, that Mr Currie's charging this testimony with twenty-four historical mistakes, no way affected its proper substance; but was a mere wrangling about circumstances; and that the plain meaning of peoples approving of it at their accession, was their signifying *their conjunction with the Associate Presbytery, in the same con-*

* See all these, and other valuable papers, collected together, in the *Re exhibition of the Testimony*, printed and sold by WILLIAM SMITH, Glasgow.

session of the truths of God, held forth from his word, in our received standards. Now, it is notour, that not the word of God, but acts of parliament, or assembly, or like fallible vouchers, support the historic narrations therein contained.

Though plenty of objections were mustered up against this testimony; some reckoning it sinfully defective, and others reckoning it as much redundant; yet the prevailing party of the ministry in the nation, proceeding on, in their defection, and a multitude of them giving new offence, by reading from their pulpit on the Lord's day, an act of parliament for discovering the murderers of captain Porteous, in which that civil court had claimed a spiritual headship over the church, constituting themselves judges of ministers qualifications to sit in her courts, and threatening ecclesiastic censure, if their civil authority was not obeyed; two ministers and a multitude of elders and private Christians, joined the seceding brethren. The reading of Porteous' paper from the pulpit, in the time of divine service, they reckoned a very criminal profanation of the Christian Sabbath; and a subjection of the readers to the parliament as their *spiritual head*. The offended people warmly petitioned the Associate Presbytery, to afford them sermon, and hold fasts with them, that they might mourn over the apostacy and wickedness of the times. Their requests were granted; but not without much deliberation.

These people were far from accounting their leaving of their ministers unreasonable or groundless. They knew, God had commanded his people to come out of a corrupt church, that they might not be partakers in her plagues*; that he had commanded them to withdraw from brethren walking disorderly†; that he had charged them to mark such, as by their evil courses caused offences, and to avoid them‡; had charged them to beware of the legal leaven or doctrine of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod§.—In vain, you told them,

* *Rev.* xviii. 4.

† *Rom.* xvi. 17.

† *2 Thess.* iii. 6.

§ *Mark* viii. 15.

that Jesus Christ and his prophets and apostles, maintained communion with the Jewish church: They knew the qualifications of the New-Testament ministers did not turn upon natural descent, and ceremonial purity, so much as under the Old; but upon things spiritual and moral. They knew, men did not now cut off themselves from all public ordinances, by withdrawing from a particular national church; as they did, when there was but one tabernacle, or temple wherein God caused his own name to dwell. — They desired you to prove, that Jesus, and his prophets or apostles, countenanced the corrupt party in their time: they granted, that he, just before his death, required his disciples to regard the civil rulers, who *sat in Moses' seat*; but they challenged you to prove, he required them to hear the ecclesiastic officers, who *sat in Aaron's*: they challenged you to prove, that Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea, sat in the Jewish sanhedrim, after it condemned the Lord of glory; or, though they continued in this civil court, with very wicked companions, to prove from thence, our duty to continue in a particular church, or with a particular part thereof, obstinate in their wickedness and apostacy. — In vain you told them, God in the apostolic age enjoined no separation from the churches of Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Pergamos, and Thyatira, notwithstanding of the various corruptions therein: for they believed, no particular church was to be separated from, till she appeared obstinate in apostacy; and they desired you to prove, that any of these churches continued obstinately deaf to the apostolic admonitions given them. — In vain you told them, that their withdrawal was a breaking up of the communion of saints, and an interpretative condemnation of Christ for holding communion with any, who did not withdraw along with them: They knew, God had charged them to withdraw even from BRETHREN, who walked disorderly: they challenged you to shew, how one, who was bound by the word of God, and solemn covenant with him, to maintain the doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith, and Presbyterian government, could, without any disorder

or degree of scandal, countenance or bid God speed a minister, who was obstinately overthrowing said doctrine or government: They knew God had charged them to *buy the truth*, and not sell it; no, not to have fellowship with good men: They know not, how inward grace, which lies in the hidden man of the heart, could be the term of visible church communion, especially to such as cannot search the heart, and try the reins of their neighbour: They challenged you to prove, that there is no real saint in the Popish church, from which, notwithstanding, God expressly requires us to withdraw; or to prove, that Luther and Calvin's obedience to that command, amounted to a breaking up the communion of the saints, and was an interpretative condemning of Christ, merely because some saint, whom he loves to the end, and waters every moment, sinfully disobeyed his solemn mandate, and did not come along with them. 'Do we, said they, condemn Christ, for retaining his saints alway in his everlasting arms, if we refuse to sit down with them at a communion table, that moment they commit adultery, as David; idolatry, as Solomon; or, with curses and oaths, deny their Master, as Peter?'

They knew the grounds of separation from a church, ought alway to be solid and weighty; such as heresy in doctrines, idolatry in worship, tyranny in government, violent intrusion of pastors, scandalous lives of the ministry, or sinful terms of communion. They thought, they had several of these in their case: Knowing what vows their ministers came under at their ordination, they reckoned them guilty of perjury and scandal, if they were notorious breakers thereof. If their Pastor entertained them with legal Arminian harangues, instead of the gospel of Christ, they thought it full time to flee from the poison, and go, where they might have food for their souls. If through his unfaithfulness, they, at the Lord's table, were in danger of having the elements to receive from an elder known to be a profane swearer or drunkard, and to give to a fellow-communicant, as well known, and to be as grossly ignorant, or almost

prayerless person, they thought their condition very unhappy. If he habitually accommodated the censures, and other ordinances of the church, to the humours of his hearers, especially the great, the suspected, the *man-pleaser* could not be a servant to Christ. If he was extremely slothful and careless, or more given to his farm or carnal employment, they suspected Christ had not sent him, as he had not given him a spirit for, and love to his work. If their pastor had a better personal character than some others, but prostituted this gift of God, to support such as were naughty, by assisting at their communions, or conniving at their sinful procedure in judicatures, they reckoned this a plain bidding of them God speed, and so accounted him a noted *partaker in their evil deeds*: *A little leaven, said they, leaveneth the whole lump.*

Nothing they more objected to, than the violent intrusion of a pastor, by the power and influence of a patron. They know, the sacred oracles assign the choice of church officers, to adult church members, free of scandal. The hundred and twenty disciples at Jerusalem, chose candidates for the apostleship*. The multitude of the Christian people chose their deacons, and the apostles ordained them†. In all the churches, elders, or presbyteries, *were ordained by the election or suffrages* of the professed believers‡. Christ charges his people to *try the Spirits* ||; a sure proof they have some capacity for it; but to what purpose should they TRY them, if they have not power to chuse the fit, and refuse the improper, but must accept whoever is imposed upon them; Christ's *kingdom*, himself declared with his dying breath, *is not of this world*, John xviii. 36.; how then is it possible for civil property, to constitute one a member, far less a ruler thereof? How can civil property, however considerable, enable the patron to discern, better than themselves, what ministers talents are best suited and most edifying to the souls of such as are *taught of*

* Acts i. 15. — 26.

† Chap. xiv. 23. Gr.

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God? Will his civil property qualify him to answer to God for all these souls, over whom he imposes a pastor? Can civil property exalt a man, in spiritual things, above God's poor ones, who are *rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom*, which he hath promised to them that love him? Is God a respecter of persons? If he condemn the preference of a rich man to a poor, in respect of a seat in our worshipping assemblies †; is it possible, that he, for the sake of civil greatness, will give any man power to dispose the souls of his people, into the hands of such spiritual physicians, guides, and governors, as the man pleaseth? If one may chuse his natural physician, is it reasonable to deny him the choice of one for his soul? In a voluntary society, such as the church, how can one have the relation of a minister to a congregation thereof, fixed, without, or contrary to their consent? How can we believe him a messenger of Christ? How can we pray for, or in faith hear him *as such*, for whom providence would never open a regular entrance, but he was obliged to be thrust in by the window, as *a thief and a robber*? In vain you told them of the great man's superior learning; they had read in their Bible, that the mysteries of the kingdom are often *hid from the wise and prudent* of this world, *and revealed unto babes*: and that *not many wise men after the flesh, not many noble are called*. In vain you told them, that a great part of the congregation were the patron's tenants or servants; their Bible informed them, that *in Christ there is neither male nor female, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all*. In vain you told them, the rich paid most, or all of the stipend; they knew the contrary; that heritors purchase the lands with the burden of the stipend thereon, and so obtain them at the less price: their Bible informed them, it was a *SORCERER's*, not a Christian principle, that the spiritual gifts of God, or privileges of his church, can be *purchased with money*. — In vain you told them that the residence of the great was more fixed, than of the poor cottager; they shewed you instances of the poor remaining in the same parish from generation to

generation, while the rich had often changed their property: they pointed out the poor man, who more attended the gospel, and more prayed for success to it, and was more a comfort to his faithful minister, in one year, than sundry great men and patrons in twenty. — To as little purpose you told them, that the civil law compelled to settle the presentee, be the opposition what would; they knew the contrary; and moreover their Bible had taught them, that we *ought to obey God, rather than men.*

For what Simony, sacrilege, perjury, and cruel wasting of the church, said they, doth patronage open a door? To please a friend, to gratify or reward a chaplain, the presentee is complimented with the sacred function: the souls of men are sold over to his care, and the devoted revenues secured to his purse: and what hinders him to return some obsequious compliance, or carnal acknowledgment, for the presentation he receives? How readily are the honour of Christ, and the salvation of men, thus betrayed into the hand of their open adversaries? A notorious infidel, a blasphemer, a profaner of the Sabbath, an atheistical neglecter of the worship of God in his closet and family, an unclean whoremonger, an habitual drunkard; in fine, one who has not so much religion, as, with Satan, to *believe and tremble*, if he is a patron, chuses abassadors for Christ, and pastors to the souls of his people. Will this man commit the presentation for the ministry to FAITHFUL; or not rather to erroneous, complaisant, and naughty men?

By patronage, how readily may one be admitted to the sacred office, who, at his ordination, will solemnly declare and vow before God, angels, and men, That he believes the whole doctrine contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith, to be founded on the word of God; and that he will maintain and defend it, in opposition to all Popish, Arian, Arminian, and other errors: and yet, in contradiction to his sworn Confession, will that moment believe, and will afterward habitually or frequently preach to his people, Arminian, and other errors:—in contradiction to his sworn Confession, will

indulge his hearers in the neglect of Sabbath sanctification, and of the daily secret, and private worship of God:—in contradiction to his sworn Confession, will habitually baptize the children of such, whose gross ignorance unfits them to profess their faith, and whose notour wickedness demonstrates, they intend no obedience to Christ;—and will admit, perhaps without any trial, to the *Christian feast*, persons who know not the very first principles of the oracles of God; or who are openly wicked swearers, drunkards, whoremongers, &c.

How readily may one be admitted, who, at his ordination, will solemnly avow, that he believes the Presbyterian government and discipline to be founded on, and agreeable to the word of God; and engage that, to the utmost of his power, he will maintain and defend it all the days of his life; while, in contradiction thereto, he that very moment improves a Popish presentation, as the whole or chief part of his call to that office; and intends to encourage others in doing the like:—in contradiction to his vow, is constantly disposed to ridicule our covenant-engagements, to maintain said government and discipline; and our martyrs, who suffered in adherence thereto: and, as often as occasion permits, will assist in breaking down various points in Presbyterian government; will pervert the discipline, overlooking or protecting those guilty of error and scandal, and censuring these conscientious adherents to truth; or at least without protesting against, or inward grief for them, will witness attacks on the doctrine, worship, discipline, or government, of Christ?

By patronage, how readily may one be admitted to the ministry, who, at his ordination, will solemnly affirm, That zeal for the glory of God, love to Jesus Christ, and desire of the salvation of men, not any worldly interest or view, are the chief motives to undertake that office; and that he hath used no undue means, by himself, or others, to procure this call; while it is notourly known, he, by himself, or friends, solicited, at least accepted a popish presentation, to procure, or rather instead of, a call; and whose future unconcern for

his flock, attended with a sharp look out for his stipend, will plainly manifest, that not zeal for the glory of God, love to Christ, or desire of mens salvation, but worldly views and interest, were his chief motives to undertake that work ?

Hereby one is readily admitted to the sacred function, who, in his ordination-vows, will solemnly engage to rule well his own family ; and to live a holy and circumspect life ; and faithfully, diligently, and chearfully to discharge all the parts of his ministerial work ; who, in contradiction to these vows, will frequently indulge himself in such loose and carnal behaviour, as no way becomes a follower and messenger of Christ ; will too often neglect the morning or evening sacrifice of secret or family worship ; will almost wholly neglect the religious instruction of his children, or servants ; will witneis his hearers profanely swear, or prostitute the Sabbath, without administering a shadow of reproof to them ; will flatter men, especially if great, in a sinful course ; and encourage them to hope, that their good works will recommend them to the favour of God ;—who will, in Jesus' name, attest elders to the general assembly, as persons of a sober and Christian practice, strict observers of the Sabbath, punctual attenders upon public ordinances, regular maintainers of the daily worship of God in their families, when he knows for certain the truth of the very reverse ; will chearfully, and without trial, admit vile persons, to partake of the sacramental food of the children of Christ ; will spend his precious, his devoted hours in idle chat, or in overseeing farms, or perusing romances and plays : and by neglecting to visit his people, even when sick and dying ; by neglecting to catechise them, especially such as are of age or high rank ; and by his preaching about an hour on Sabbath, for the most of the year, and the like ; will plainly shew the ministerial work to be, not his pleasure, but his task, which, for the sake of his benefice, he must undergo.

In fine, said they, by patronage one may be admitted for a Presbyterian minister, who, if searched out, may be found, an almost Papist or Heathen ; for, does he not

seemingly believe the lawfulness of jesuitic equivocation, or the validity of Popish dispensations to sin, who, in the above manner, solemnly vows, and constantly practises the very reverse?—if he contemn, if he jest at part of the sacred page; if his sermons and practice mark him determined to know every thing, rather than *Jesus Christ, and him crucified*; has he not practically denied the Christian faith, and become worse than an infidel?—If he harangue upon the dignity of our corrupt nature; upon our ability to do works spiritually good, and their influence to recommend us to our Maker's indulgence and favour; passing in silence the imputation of a Saviour's perfect righteousness, and the free and all-powerful operation of his Spirit; is not this the sum of the abjured Popish, Pelagian heresy? Is not the denial, or passing in silence the appropriating work of saving faith, much of the same import with holding the general and doubtful faith of the Pope?—If he assist in deposing a brother for conscientious refusal of an appointment, not warranted in the word of God, is he not guilty of abjured Popish tyranny against Christian liberty?—If he, even without trial, admit the grossly ignorant, and notoriously wicked, to the seals of the new covenant; infers not that, his Popish belief, that very act of receiving the sacraments is profitable, be the manner of doing it what will?—Doth not even the private administration of baptism, flow from, and tend to confirm the Popish tenet, of that ordinance being absolutely necessary to salvation?—If a minister entertain his people with flighty language, which they do not understand, is that much different from the Roman service of an unknown tongue?—If, instead of the heart-searching and affecting truths of God, he amuse them with antic gestures, and popish elocution; wherein are these preferable to Romish beads? Is not his withholding from them proper instruction, and carelessly suffering them to continue in gross ignorance, a practical holding of his Holiness's maxim, that *Ignorance is the mother of devotion*?—If he dismiss from public censure, without appearance of sorrow for the offence; or, if he accept, or allow the ac-

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ceptance of money, instead of public satisfaction for scandal, gives he not in, to the abjured Popish penance? If he pursue for, if he cheerfully accept his benefice, while he doth as little for it as possible, is not this an imitation of the Romish lazy monks?

To such purpose reasoned the people, who left their pastors, and joined the secession.—Too many of the above-mentioned possible fruits of patronage, they thought plainly marked in the conduct of several of the intruders. Where no violent intrusion took place, it was not always the worst minister, who lost the greatest number of his people to the Seceders.—The general prevalence of gross ignorance, and loose living, in a congregation, often proved an effectual bulwark against the progress of the secession. But where a diligent pastor had trained up his people in the knowledge of their standards; if he died, or stumbled into some leading defection, there was oft a crowding towards it. Not a few at the first, represented their grievances to their pastor, before they left him. These generally obtained but small satisfaction; and some of them were excommunicated for their pains; so the course came to be frequently refused*.

Many who left the established pastors, thought they were bound to train up their children in the way wherein they should go, that when old, they might not depart from it. They thought themselves obliged to train up their children witnesses for God, as well as themselves. They durst not hazard their childrens souls, with a naughty, legal, or lazy pastor; or who had no token of a mission from Christ; or who prostituted his good character, by assisting the naughty on sacramental occasions, &c. any more than their own. They knew not

* A late author proposes the hurt done to the wealth of the nation, by the Secession, in the payment of stipends to so many Seceding Ministers, as a powerful reason for endeavouring to crush the Secession: but let him know, that if Seceders act in character, they can easily save as much time and expence from the service of Satan, in the articles of pride, drunkenness, &c. as will fully answer what is required for their peculiar circumstances in religious affairs; and it is believed, that author meets with as few Seceders, either bankrupts or beggars, as he does of his own party.

how, what was poisonous, hurtful, or inexpedient to the aged, could be nourishing, harmless, and fit for the young. Their cause they accounted the cause of God; and shrunk at the thought of having an hand in its dropping, and being buried, in their house. The scripture had informed them, that children left to themselves bring their parents to shame. They observed, that few Seceders children, whom, while under age, their parents had not trained up in their own way, comforted and honoured these parents with much appearance of serious godliness: and therefore they caused their little ones attend the seceding preachers, as well as themselves.

Numbers of them even carried their seceding views, into the affair of their marriage. In obedience to our valuable laws, civil and ecclesiastic, they so generally detested clandestine marriages, that for many years an instance of it was scarce found among them. Clandestine marriage they looked on as **SINFUL**, in a variety of respects.

1. **SINFUL**, as contrary to the very law of nature, which suggests, that an entrance into the nuptial state should be public, in order to prevent future solicitations of persons concerned, to uncleanness, or marriage with another. Hence it is the common law or custom, of every nation under heaven, except where the sexes live in the manner of beasts, to have marriage publicly intimated, or celebrated. Thus even nature itself teaches us, 1 Cor. xi. 14.

2. **SINFUL**, as it is a rebellion against the prudent regulations appointed, repeatedly appointed, in this and other Christian kingdoms and churches, in the purest of times. In these, Clandestine marriage hath been, not by a few individuals, but by the collective wisdom of both church and state, prohibited under severe censures and penalties, as a scandalous and criminal nuisance to both. Their lawful statutes God himself adopts, and commands us to obey for conscience sake, and under pain of damnation, Rom. xiii. 1, — 5. 1 Pet. ii. 13. Heb. xiii. 7, 17.

3. **SINFUL**, as contrary to the manner of marriages

approved in scripture. Both in the Old and New Testament, **BETROTHING** is represented as antecedent to marriage, Exod. xxi. 8. and xxii. 16. Lev. xix. 20. Deut. xx. 7. and xxii. 23, 27, 28. and xxviii. 30. Matth. i. 18. The marriages of Jacob, Gen. xxix. 22. Samson, Judg. xiv. 1,—8. at Cana of Galilee, John ii. 1,—11. were public. The allusion to marriage, Psal. xlv. 9,—15. Christ's parables of the children of the bride-chamber; the marriage of the king's son; and of the ten virgins, Mat. ix. 15. and xxii. 1,—13. and xxv. 1,—13. do all suppose the universal custom of public marriage.

4. **SINFUL**, as it includes a rash and indeliberate rushing into a most important state of life, deeply connected with the glory of God, the order of his church, and the temporal, spiritual, and eternal happiness or misery of the persons concerned, and their seed;—contrary to all these scriptures which require discretion, deliberation, and circumspection, and wisdom in our conduct, Psa'. cxii. 5. Eccl. v. 2. Isa. xxviii. 16. Prov. xix. 2. Eph. v. 15.

5. **SINFUL**, as it deprives parents of their due honour, and authority, and robs them of their most precious property on earth,—their children. When God created Adam and Eve, he, as their parent, formally joined them in marriage, Gen. ii. 18,—25. Nothing is more plainly commanded of God, than that parents should have a principal hand in disposing of their children in marriage Exod. xxxiv. 16. Deut. vii. 3. 1 Cor. vii. 38. How rebellious then, against him, must it be, for children to dispose of themselves, without consulting their parents! How base ingratitude, thus to require parents, who have with much labour, care, and expence, brought them up! How dishonest to dispose of that property of their parents, which is dearer to them, than either money, or goods, without their consent; and that, too often, to the spiritual, if not temporal and eternal ruin of themselves and their seed! How contrary thus to God's command of honouring, obeying, and dealing honestly with parents, Exod. xx. 12. Eph. vi. 1, 2. Prov. xviii. 24.!

6. SINFUL, as therein a solemn oath is profaned, being used in an ordinance of Satan, an irregular method of marriage, and given to one who is ordinarily no more than a profligate vagabond, who basely takes upon himself, to administer the same without any authority from either church or state. How directly contrary this to that awful command, *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain!* Exod. xx. 7.

7. SINFUL, as it is a manifest fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. It is plainly an institution of the prince of darkness, calculated to cover antecedent fornication, or to introduce persons into a state and life of adultery with such as stand married to some others; and by means of it, I have known one man married to three or four wives, all alive at once. It is a Satanic invention for the speedy gratification of burning fleshly lust, and for catching a claim to some external property, in a manner indirect and dishonest. Suppose some should have none of these base ends in view, yet herein they put on the shameful badge, and render themselves so like the others, that the world cannot distinguish between them; and so they justify, encourage, and harden them in their sin;—in much the same manner, as one who would encourage and harden people in whoredom, should he, while his own house is at hand, wittingly take his lodging and victuals in a public stew, suppose he should never so much as touch one of the harlots within. In this light, how contrary are such marriages to 1 Thess. i. 22. *Abstain from all appearance of evil;* Eph v. 11. *Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them?* And how plainly a consenting with thieves, and partaking with vile adulterers? Psal. i. 18.

8. And hence SINFUL, as it imprints a very public and lasting blot upon our Christian character, which is very precious; and, as well as our body and soul, is in baptism devoted to God. How contrary to scripture, Prov. xx. 1. Eccl. vii. 1, to devote that character, which ought to be an ornament to Christ and the gospel, Tit,

ii. 10. to be a chariot for Satan, in which he may ride triumphant against Christ and his church, and insult the order and decency prescribed in his word !

9. SINFUL, as in the case of Christians ; it gives a most public offence to the church, and occasions a reproach and blasphemy of the name of God among the profane, contrary to 1 Cor. x. 31, 32. Rom. ii. 24. Mat. xviii. 7.

10. SINFUL, as directly contrary to the express laws of Christ, or marrying *only in the Lord* ; that is, in way of consulting the Lord for direction ; with such only as appear to fear the Lord, and in a way calculated to bring the blessing of the Lord upon their family, — and of *doing all things decently and in order, — and to the use of edifying*, 1 Cor. vii. 29. and xiv. 26, 40.

11. SINFUL, as it implies a contempt of the awful warnings, which God, in his word and providence, hath given against such marriages ; and as without a thorough repentance, it is calculated to bring the judgments of God upon the persons guilty, and their posterity after them. The only clear instances of such marriage, and in which the consent of parents was contemned, recorded in scripture, are three ; and all followed with the terrible vengeance of God. The professing descendants of Seth saw the irreligious daughters of Cain, that they were fair, and gratified their inclinations with an immediate marriage. What followed ? An universal brood of graceless profligates for their children, and then an overwhelming to drown both parents and children, Gen. vi. 1, — 8. — Another instance is that of Esau. What followed ? Grief to his parents, and an exclusion of himself and his posterity from the church of God, till their remembrance ceased from among men, Gen. xxvi. 34, 35. and xxxvi. Mal. i. 2, 3. — A third instance is that of Judah, who, at his own hand, in a rambling visit, married a Canaanitish maid. What followed ? Most shocking scenes of wickedness and misery in his family, Gen. xxxviii. — On many such accounts did Seceders consider clandestine marriages as highly criminal. Many of them wedded only such as were of, or favour-

ably disposed to their own way. This, other circumstances suitable, they thought most agreeable to the divine command, of being *equally yoked*, and of marrying none apt to seduce them from the way of the Lord. This course they thought most expedient to promote religious intimacy between husband and wife;—to promote harmony in their family-prayers;—and to secure the careful education of their children in the ways of truth.

The secession had not long continued when the connection between the ministers became considerably strict. To have a minister without the established church, and a people within it, they could not comprehend. While they had freedom to continue within, they reckoned it schismatic to own and support a minister without. To have connected themselves with a seceding minister, by giving him a civil bond for his stipend, they thought contrary to the nature of Christ's *kingdom*, which is *not of this world*, and too near a-kin to a giving and an encouragement of him to take, the oversight of the flock for filthy lucre. A promise or vow at their accession, never to hear any but seceding ministers, was, that I know of, never required. The influence of conscience, real or professed, was their bond of connection. By this, the people left hearing many in the Establishment, because they thought them not apparently messengers of Christ. They left hearing of others, because of their connection with, the former; or, because they did not see, how hearing of them, could either tend to awaken to reformation any in the church; or to confirm any in the secession, which they took to be the way of the Lord. All the nation being under solemn vows to promote the covenanted work of reformation, such as were contemners of it, or careless about it, were by them thought, not altogether *free of scandal* on that head. To admit to sealing ordinances, such whose most noted scandals they could have no influence to censure, or purge, was thought to involve in considerable perplexity. For seceding ministers to have judged of their fitness for the seals of God's covenant, who never com-

mitted themselves to their care, but continued pleased with their established pastors, might have appeared very assuming; and in some cases have occasioned disputes in their own congregation. — From such views the seceding ministers were much on the reserve, with respect to the admission of these who were not of their body, nor disposed towards an accession thereto. It was suspected such a reserve was too hastily indulged, in the breach of fellowship with Mess. John Kid, James Wardlaw, and other worthy ministers or people of that stamp, who remained behind them, in the established church. This, some of the Seceders repented of, when they had not these, nor their equals, in the church, to hold communion with. It cannot, however, be denied, that some of these worthy ministers, by connecting themselves at sacramental, or other occasions, with intruders, or their abettors, gave too much provocation.

The plain, and, as was reckoned, harsh dealing of the second testimony; with the crowding of the people after the seceding ministers, mightily provoked the managers, in the established church. The eight brethren were libelled and cited to the assembly 1739. When they compared, the assembly intimated their readiness to drop the libel, and every thing bygone, and to receive them with open arms, into full ministerial and Christian communion with them. This offer the seceding ministers refused to accept; and conceiving, that the court chiefly consisted of intruders, and others active in the growing defection, they boldly declined her authority, as a *not right constituted* judicature of Jesus Christ. Provoked anew with this daring attack, the managers resolved to resent it with vigour. Without finding them erroneous in doctrine, or scandalous in practice, the next assembly, 1740, deposed them from the ministerial office, as to the exercise of it in this church. — The assembly's restoration to the office of the ministry, Mr John Glas, an impenitent and furious Independent, who had plainly broken his ordination-vows, and continued declaiming against Presbyterian government, reproaching our national covenanting, and setting up as many sec-

tarian congregations as lay in his power, attended their prosecution against the seceding ministers. A notour evidence, they were zealous for themselves, not for the truth.

These brethren had never given evidence, that their secession was made for the sake of filthy lucre. They did not, before they took that step, in the manner of some since, secure themselves in larger stipends: — And now being deposed, they clave to their flocks, though, in sundry of them, the hope of subsistence was for the present pretty inconsiderable. The civil magistrate quickly turned them out of their kirks, and claims to their benefice. Their prosecution occasioned the increase of their followers. As their numbers increased, so did their trials. — Some royal fasts being indicted, on account of the Spanish war, some of their people, in a particular corner of the country, where the antigovernment opinions considerably prevailed, solicited them to determine judicially, Whether it was lawful for Seceders to continue observing fasts and thanksgivings, even on grounds and causes specified by themselves, upon the days nominated by the king, for such exercises. To this petition no answer was given, till a *pro re nata*, or *interim* meeting of presbytery, appointed for considering a different affair, and while fourteen of twenty-two members were absent, * Mess. Thomas Nairn, Alexander Moncrief, and Thomas Mair, irregularly dragged in

* The members present at this Presbytery, as marked in the original minute, now before me, besides Mr Thomson, moderator, were Messrs. Alexander Moncrief, Thomas Nairn, Thomas Mair, William Hutton, Ebenezer and Ralph Euskie's, ministers, and Mr James Wardlaw, from Dunfermline, ruling Elder: The first four of whom voted for that act, as far as it disallows Seceders observing fasts by their own authority, on days appointed by the supreme civil magistrate; and the last three voted against it. — This meeting was held at Dunfermline, Jan. 8th, 1741. Many of the members went home the first week, as is evident from the number of absents. Messrs. William Wilson was at Perth; Mr James Fisher was at Kinclaven; Mr James Mair was at Linton, and Mr Smiton was at Killmaurs; and the whole elders were absent, except Mr James Wardlaw. — The meeting was *pro re nata*, and therefore the appointment of the fast illegal. †

that question. When it was carried, I think, by **FOUR votes against THREE**, That in regard they conceived the established church-judicatories had surrendered their power of appointing fasts and thanksgivings into the hand of the Sovereign; and that the Sovereign had taken that power into his own hand; it would be a sinful conniving at his Majesty's exercising a spiritual headship over the church, for Seceders to observe public fasts or thanksgivings on the diets named by him, even on causes or grounds of their own framing.

Three of the four who voted this decision, afterwards altered their opinion. And the deep silence concerning this affair, in the covenant-acknowledgment of sins, which they, some time after, drew up, plainly shews, That the above-mentioned decision was far from being generally approved by the ministers. Numbers of the people, however, in different corners, once giving into a prejudice in favours of it, it was but in few places found for edification, to observe public fasting or thanksgiving, on the diets nominated by the king. The seceding ministers indeed failed not to recommend private fasting on such occasions; and to admonish their people to beware of offending others, with any public labour. So that, excepting a few of the forward and less judicious, as little open offence was ever given to the government on this head by the Seceders, as by them who professed to be the most zealous observers of the royal fasts.

From a number of favourable reports concerning the English Methodists, not a few of the Seceders had judged them laborious reformers, and prayed for their success. By letters, Mr. Ralph Erskine corresponded with Mr John Wesley, one, if not their principal leader. Informed by a private hand of his unsoundness; informed by Mr Whitefield, that he and his brother *blasphemed the doctrine of election*, and *scarce preached one principle agreeable to the gospel of Jesus Christ*; and finding, that Mr. Wesley declined giving him any satisfaction, with respect to his orthodoxy, he entirely dropped his correspondence with him. Nor indeed were the Seceders for-

ry thereat, when they afterwards observed how Mr Wesley copied after the Popish orders, in sending forth, or superintending a number of lay-preachers, labouring in different nations; — and had, in the Popish manner, instituted a confession of heart-secrets, in the societies under his care, calculated to render them dissemblers, or to render him and his underlings so much master of their secrets, as should make it dangerous for them to desert his cause: — when they heard of his money-rated tickets for different degrees of saintship: when they observed, what fulsom epide; what want of candour; what pretence to working of miracles; what estimation of Popish or Popish-like superstition; what vain and false characterising of his followers, as a body of perfect, or almost perfect men; what extolling of Servetus, a most shocking blasphemer of the blessed Trinity, as a *holy and wise man*, as appears in his public performances: when they observed, how he taught, and recommended his preachers to teach in his societies, That orthodoxy, or soundness of opinion, is a slender part of religion, if any part at all: That God gives every man, in his natural state, a power to accept of an offered salvation; That every man, in his baptism, has a principle of grace infused into him, which cannot be lost, but by a long course of sinning: That the fulfilling of the broken law, in its precept and penalty, by Christ, was not necessary to purchase our salvation: That not Christ's satisfaction to law and justice, but faith and repentance, are the terms of salvation to fallen men: That men have reason to complain, if Christ died not for all, and if all be not rendered able to receive him: That if God pass by nine tents of mankind, if he deny any soul what is necessary to his present good, or final acceptance; if he hate any we are bound to love, he cannot be infinitely good, nay, is worse than we are: That if God from eternity chose some to everlasting life, and purposed to leave others to perish in their sin, he is an *almighty tyrant; and more false, cruel, and unjust, than the DEVIL*: That God's purpose of election consists in his choosing obedient believers, according to the foreknowledge of their good works; and our obedi-

ence to Christ is the cause of his becoming the Author of eternal salvation to us : That no man is particularly elected till the day of his conversion to God : That it is better to be a Turk, a Deist, an Atheist, than to believe God has only chosen *some men*, to everlasting life, and not others ; or to believe that Christ died not equally for all men : That to say, that the covenant of grace was made with Christ, and its condition exacted from him, and fulfilled by him, in our stead, is *false*, and the very centre of Antinomianism : That the phrase, *imputed righteousness*, has done immense hurt, and tempts men to work all uncleanness with greediness ; the nice metaphysical doctrine of Christ's imputed righteousness leads men to licentiousness ; the doctrine of the saints having a sinless obedience in Christ their head, while they are notorious, that is, *manifestly* sinners in themselves, is calculated to please and encourage the vilest rakes : That not the imputed righteousness of Christ, but our faith, is our justifying righteousness before God : That our keeping of the commandments is undoubtedly the way to eternal life ; that we are to obey the law in order to our final acceptance with God ; our holiness, as well as the blood of Christ, will give us boldness in the day of judgment, and will be the ground of our being then pronounced righteous : That our salvation is by works as a condition ; that we are rewarded of God according to our works, for the sake of our works, and according to the merit of our works : That Heathens, who never heard of Christ, are accepted of God, for their fearing of God, and working righteousness, according to the light they have : That there is no such thing as a state of justification, or sanctification, but men are every moment accepted of God, or not, according to their temper or work : That our justification is incomplete at first, and perfected by degrees ; that to be justified is the same thing, as to be born of God : That a man may be justified, and yet not have the Spirit, nor Christ dwelling in them : That we cannot possess justification or peace with God, without knowing that we do so : That we cannot be Christian believers, except we be free from

sin : That the best of men do not complain of disorder in their affections; nor that, when they would do good, evil is present with them: That while our heart is perfect in piety or love, we may, in our life, be compassed about with sinful infirmities: That the doctrine of the unfailing perseverance of the saints is deadly poison: That the souls of believers at their death do not immediately pass into the heavenly glory, but to a middle state called Paradise: That church or state may impose indifferent ceremonies in God's worship, and exclude Christians from church-communion, merely because their conscience cannot comply therewith.—On these, and many other accounts, the Seceders have not a favourable opinion of Mr Wesley, nor of the preachers he superintends; as it is feared they too much resemble their leader.

From Mr George Whitefield's own missives to Mr Erskine, and other reports, sundry, if not all of the Seceding Ministers, conceived no small regard for him. But finding, by converse with him, That he decried every particular form of church-government, as a *mere human device*; finding, in his sermons and journals, a number of hints, which they deemed not agreeable to the word of God; and exceedingly offended with his printed account of God's dealing with his soul, wherein, they thought, he had shown a strange fondness to run the parallel between himself and Jesus Christ: had represented Popish and some other bad books, as the darling directors of his spiritual exercise: had founded his call to the ministry upon early stirring of his affections, idle tales, dreams, or impressions: had represented abstinence from flesh in Lent, living on coarse food, wearing of woollen gloves, a patched gown, and dirty shoes, as *great promoters of the spiritual life*: had averred, that in his unconverted state, he had endeavoured to do all to the glory of God; was built up in the knowledge and fear of God; received abundant grace, in receiving the the Lord's supper; and increased in favour with God and man: had represented his conversion as if begun in an uncommon drought and clamminess in his throat,

and which, by means of his casting himself down on the bed, and, in imitation of Jesus Christ, crying out, *I thirst*, was removed, and succeeded with a ravishing joy and rejoicing in God his Saviour, by which his conversion was finished; and pretended to have been guided by the Spirit, and by watching and reading the scripture on his knees, *in the minutest circumstance*, as plainly as the Jews by consulting the Urim and Thummim, &c.: these, and the like things, together with his *letter and extract*, wherein he insisted for joining Christians of all denominations, Papists, or Protestants, Quakers, Arians, Arminians, &c. if not all Jews and Heathens, into one religious society, without minding their different sentiments; provoked the Seceders to turn their regard into dislike, and warm opposition*.

In 1642, a surprising commotion, in the souls and bodies of men, happened in various places of the nation, as they attended upon sermons. This the principal friends and admirers of Mr Whitefield, extolled as a wonderful work of the Spirit of God. The Seceders allowed that the lives of many were reformed by it, for the present; and that truly divine and converting influence might attend the gospel-truths preached on these occasions: yet, because of the bodily convulsions, the disorderly noise, the imaginary views of Christ as a man, the dislike to a covenanted work of reformation, and the proud boasting, which they thought attended it, they accounted it mostly delusive. Amidst the warm contention on so critical a topic, it is possible, both parties run into extremes, and became stumbling-blocks, one to another. But multitudes of the subjects of this famed

* With what candour Dr Gillies conceals these things in his history of Mr Whitefield, and so culpably misrepresents the carriage of the Seceding Ministers towards him, particularly in their conference at Dunfermline, I leave to others to judge. Is it possible he forgot, that his friend's veracity was far from being untainted?—forgot that his neighbour, Mr Fisher, had published a different account in his review of Mr Robe's preface; and intimated, that he had a copy of the whole conference, which it became Mr Gillies, as a candid historian, to have endeavoured to consult? How unworthy of a truly catholic spirit, are such low attempts of defamation!

influence, returning to their wonted course, the Seceders were thereby, not a little confirmed, in their own sentiments thereof.

Mean while, they had another trial from among themselves. It was their earnest prayer to God, that he would make our sovereign king George, and every subordinate magistrate, hearty friends to, and promoters of a covenanted work of reformation. They were, however, firmly persuaded, that difference in religion did not make void, or, in the least annul their just power and authority. They zealously testified against such in the land, who denied their civil authority in things lawful. Such were often publicly debarred from receiving the Lord's supper with them. In the late rebellion, not a few of them voluntarily bore arms against the pretender; not one of them appeared on his side. Numbers of them suffered considerable hardships, rather than do any thing tending to the support of his army or cause. Mr Thomas Nairn, however, one of the ministers, in his too volatile manner, presumed to assert, that none but a covenanted Presbyterian could be the lawful sovereign of this realm. Quickly his brethren prosecuted him with vigour, and expelled him from their society. They judicially refuted his sentiments; and published a large declaration, wherein they shewed, from the word of God, our subordinate standards, and covenants, that the whole nation ought, for conscience sake, to obey the present civil government, in all things lawful. Nor in respect of obedience to our laudable civil laws, are they, or their people, afraid to risk a comparison, with any party in the kingdom.

After about seven years advisement, the seceding ministers agreed on a bond for public covenanting with God; and in the end of 1743, themselves began to swear and subscribe it. Next year, their act of presbytery, relative thereto, together with a judicial vindication of gospel truth from the injuries done it, by the general assembly 1720 and 1722, was published by them. Their covenant-bond had been abundantly short, and mostly plain, had it not reduplicated upon a long con-

cession of sins, of which, it is probable, few of their people could *fully* know the import and certainty. It must not be imagined, the seceding brethren inserted into this confession, such a multitude of historical hints, that people might swear to the truth, the fact thereof. To have sworn many of these historical articles in truth, righteousness, and judgment, was absolutely impossible: they had no vouchers for them, but the fallible testimony of men. Besides, to swear the certainty of facts in an oath directed to God as the party, appears a blasphemous attempt to certify the Omniscient, and teach the Almighty knowledge. It was necessary, however people should have a considerable knowledge of, and certainty for what they solemnly confessed to God, lest their confessing work should partly amount to a hypocritical slander. The presbytery's act, constituting the swearing of this covenant, the term of ministerial and Christian communion with them, was not a little condemned. It was by many thought quite unreasonable, That a person zealously attached to divine truth, nay, to our subordinate standards and covenants, and of an eminently holy practice, should be excluded from church-fellowship with them, merely because he could not understand the meaning or certainty of every thing in this bond, and acknowledgment of sins: or, would not confess or swear to God, what he understood not. Not a few of the seceding ministers were afterwards sensible of the sinfulness of this act: nor do I know, that ever the most zealous for covenanting, did, with respect to the admission of their people to sealing ordinances, act up to the tenor of it.

To punish the Seceders pride of their success; their want of due tenderness to, and concern for those who remained behind them in the established church; their slightly laying to heart the sins of the land, which they professed to witness against; and their sad neglect to *do more than others*, in an holy and exemplary practice, the Lord gave them up to a most unchristian contention and breach among themselves. In 1745, their ministers were so increased as to constitute three presbyte-

ries under one synod. Their synodical work commenced, with an inquiry into the lawfulness of some oaths, not imposed by parliament, but used in the land. They were of opinion, that the MASON-OATH implied in it an ignorant, childish, and superstitious profanation of the name of God; and therefore harmoniously agreed to take pains to prevent any of their people having afterward any hand in the swearing thereof.

With respect to the oath imposed in some burghs, there was the warmest contention in their synod. The great point of debate was, Whether it was lawful for a Seceder to swear that clause, *I profess and allow with my heart, the true religion presently professed within this realm, and authorised by the laws thereof; I shall abide at, and defend the same to my life's end, renouncing the Roman religion called Papistry.* Mess. Ebenezer and Ralph Erskines, James Fisher, and others, contended, That since it was the true, the divine religion, professed and authorised in Scotland, ITSELF, and not the human and *faulty manner* of professing and settling IT, that was sworn,—the words of the oath not being, *As presently professed and authorised*, but words of a very different import: That since, in their secession, they had never pretended to set up a new religion, but to cleave closely to that, which they had before professed: That since, in their various testimonies, they had solemnly approved the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the church of Scotland; had solemnly declared their adherence to the standards avowed by the established church, and no other; had so often declared their adherence to the ordination-vows, which they had taken in the established church, whereby they were sworn to that religion, doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, professed and authorised in the realm: That since, though they had stated a quarrel with the manner, in which the true religion is presently professed and settled, and had testified against the corruptions of both church and state, yet they had been so far from stating a quarrel with *the true religion itself*, professed and authorised in the realm, that they had but two years be-

fore, in their declaration of principles against Mr Nairn, judicially declared the religion presently authorised to be their own, solemnly thanking God, that OUR RELIGION has such SECURITY *by the PRESENT civil government, as no nation on earth enjoys the like*; therefore they pled, that the synod could not, without the most glaring self-contradiction prohibit the swearing of the above clause; as, *in itself*, sinful for a Seceder. — Mess. Alexander Moncrief, Thomas Mair, Adam Gib, and others, no less warmly contended, that this oath being administered by these of the established church, and ought to be understood in the sense of the magistrates, for whose security it is given; and the true religion mentioned in it to be understood, as reduplicating upon every act of parliament or assembly, inconsistent with the law of God; and as including all the corruptions of both church and state: and so natively inferred, That the swearing of the disputed clause, imported a solemn renunciation and dropping of the whole of their Testimony. They contended, that the words *true religion, presently professed and authorised*, in a time of reformation, would reduplicate only upon good acts of parliament and assembly; but in a time of deformation, reduplicated upon all the bad.

After no small disputing, the defenders of the clause, and now called *Burghers*, for the sake of peace, offered to condescend to an act discharging Seceders to swear this clause of the oath, as *inexpedient* for them in the present circumstances, *viz.* of strife and contention about its meaning. This proposal the Antiburghers rejected. Nothing would please them, but an act, declaring the present swearing of it sinful for Seceders, and inconsistent with their testimony, and covenant-bond. In a meeting of synod, April 9th, 1746, they carried a *decision* to their mind. — A number of the Burgher ministers and elders protested against it; and soon after gave in their reasons, importing, that it was sinful in itself, contrary to Christian forbearance, tending to rent the church, enacted contrary to the order prescribed in the barrier acts, and carried by a catch, when many members were

absent.—Contrary to order, the Antiburghers neglected to have their answers to these reasons ready against next meeting of synod; and some of them having, in the meanwhile, publicly debarred from the Lord's table, such as maintained the lawfulness of the burghers oath, a question was induced, Whether the above decision, condemnatory of the present swearing of the religious clause of some burghers oaths, should be a term of ministerial and Christian communion with them? Conceiving, that there is a wide difference between enacting a deed of synod, and making that deed a *term of church communion*, the seven Burgher ministers who had protested against the former decision, considered this as a *new* question, and claimed a vote therein. After too much unchristian altercation, at two different meetings of synod, and notwithstanding of a dissent and protestation of the Antiburghers to the contrary, it was voted and carried, That the decision condemnatory of a present swearing of the religious clause of some burgher-oaths *should not be a term of ministerial and Christian communion with them, at least till the affair should be maturally considered in presbyteries and sessions, and their opinion* (not decisive judgment) *returned; and further means of unanimity, by prayer and conference essayed.* No sooner was this sentence carried than Mr Thomas Mair protested, That hereby the burghers had forfeited all their synodical power and authority; and the whole power of the synod devolved upon himself and his party, and such as clave to them: all of whom he, though not moderator, called to meet to-morrow in Mr Gob's house, in a synodical capacity; and then, with twenty-two more, without either moderator or clerk, withdrew from thirty-two of their brethren, constituted in the name of Christ, with their moderator and clerk among them, *viz.* Mr. James Mair, moderator, with Mess. E. R. H. and J. Erskines, J. Fisher, J. Macara, D. Smiton, I. Paton, A. Black, D. Horn, D. Telfer, W. Hutton, J. Smith, J. Johnston, A. Thomson, ministers; with T. Ford, R. Lees, A. Douglass, W. Manderston, J. Moubriay, J. Beugo, R. Wishart, G. Coventry, D. Millar, R. Pa-

terfon, J. Marshall, S. Harper, J. Reder, J. Callendar, W. Millar, J. Millar, elders. All these are marked in the minutes as present *; nor is there the smallest probability that any of them would go off, when such an important question was the subject of debate.

Next day the Burghers met synodically, according to adjournment, in the ordinary place. Upon the foundation of Mr Mair's declaration, the Antiburghers constituted themselves into a synod in Mr Gib's house. Here they sustained themselves judges of their own answers to the Burghers reasons of protest above mentioned; and of their own dissents and protests. They determined, That the Burgher ministers had forfeited all power belonging to their office; and that no seceding presbytery or session, except constituted in subordination to their present meeting, could be a lawful court of Christ. This act was the basis of their after meetings of sessions and presbyteries. Hence the Antiburghers on the South of Forth deserted their appointed diet at Stow, and constituted their Presbytery elsewhere. These on the North, absolutely refused their Burgher brethren, a seat in their court; nay, even these of them, who had not voted, in what they accounted the criminal decision. In the West, they had no presbytery, till some ministers withdrew from the Burghers. None of them would sit in session, with such elders, as refused to approve the constitution of synod in Mr Gib's house, and were for holding any church-fellowship with the Burgher ministers. They soon after began to seclude from the sacraments, such of their people, as opposed the division, and were determined to hear both sides, as opportunity should permit. These being thus driven away, went over to the Burghers.

Had the body of the Seceders refused to side themselves, and obstinately continued hearing the ministers

* *The minutes, which are a far better authority than Mr Gib, affirm, that Mr Henry Erskine was chosen to assist Mr Hutton, as clerk, at the first sederunt of that meeting of Synod.*

on both sides, it might have contributed to a speedy harmony, as to the most: But it was otherwise; and mournful was the stumbling, and the alienation of heart, that took place: multitudes were perplexed, how to side themselves; and no doubt many did it, entirely by guess: the most ignorant of the dispute were, generally the fiercest bigots. To remedy these unhappy disorders, the Burgher ministers twice begged of their brethren, an extrajudicial meeting for prayer and conference, in order to regain harmony in the cause of truth. Unwilling to convince their brethren of the crimes they had laid to their charge, or conscious of the want of sufficient arguments for that purpose, or from some other motive, the Antiburghers returned no answer, but that they could not, in consistence with their testimony, comply with any such proposal; and that their brethrens only method of peace, was to appear penitent pannels at their bar. To this they were, with all expedition, libelled and cited. None of them appeared, except Mr William Hutton. He did it, not to answer his libel, but to make a bold attack upon the constitution of their synod, as schismatical, and contrary to Presbyterian parity;—as founded on the overthrow of the office of elders, and the unnatural murder of their brethrens sacred office, &c. A speedy excommunication was his reward, and the most noted reply he ever received to his speech. This constitution of synod, the rest of the burgher brethren judicially declared null and void, contrary to scripture and reason. Meanwhile, the Antiburghers, to support their cause, prosecuted their Burgher brethren with deposition and excommunication, till they had delivered them over into the hand of Satan, and cast them out of the church, as Heathen men and Publicans.—After employing themselves, about two years in this censuring work, they were obliged to acknowledge, That themselves had all along been lying under the scandal of partaking with the Burghers in sundry of their censured crimes: from this scandal they, at a meeting of synod, purged one another, by judicial rebukes and admonitions. How scandalous persons

were fit to censure others, or to purge one another, was, at least by the Burghers, not well understood. By no small prayer and fasting, the Antiburghers implored the blessing of Heaven upon their excommunications: But God appeared to refuse binding in heaven, what they had bound on earth. The censures seemed to have no other effect, than to constitute the objects, a kind of bugbears to the Antiburgher people. Whatever abhorrence they endured from their brethren, the Burgher ministers, as helped of God, held their judicatures, and exercised their ministry as before. The Mess. Erskines, and others, lived as holily, preached as edifyingly, and died full as comfortably, as their excommunicators. Nor did it escape unobserved, that Mr Thomas Mair, who founded the excommunicating court, was, not many years after, obliged by his conscience, publicly to declare, he had been verily guilty concerning his Burgher brethrens blood: and, was himself ejected by his Antiburgher brethren, as an erroneous person, for maintaining that Christ, in *some sense*, died for all mankind.

Nothing since transacted on either side, is much worthy of our notice. Permit me only to essay an impartial account of the present agreement and difference of the two parties. The congregations belonging to both, are about two hundred, or more: in some of these are thousands of members; but the greater part fall much below that account. Which party have the greatest number of followers I know not; but their teachers of philosophy and divinity, at their rupture, happening to be on the Antiburgher side, almost all the then students went along with their masters; and to this day, that party has the greatest number of ministers, though even here the Burghers seem to gain ground.—Since 1747, both have had their respective synods, presbyteries, and sessions: both have supplied the malecontents, in their oponents congregations, with sermon: both constantly avow their adherence to the scriptures, as the **ONLY RULE** of faith and practice; both avow their adherence to the Westminster Confession of Faith, Catechism; Larger and Shorter, and to the Directory for worship,

and form of Presbyterian church-government, thereto subjoined, and to the National covenant of Scotland, and Solemn League of the three kingdoms. And they believe, few decry confessions of faith, for subordinate standards, but in order to vent some erroneous dream. With both, I hope, the gospel is preached in purity, and endeavours used to commit the ministry, only to serious and faithful men. With both, ministers deliver three public discourses on Sabbath, through the most, and not a few through the whole of the year. With both, I hope, ministers endeavour publicly to catechise, and privately to visit their congregations, at least once a year, without respect of persons. With both, the private administration of baptism is detested, and shunned, as an abjured relic of Popery. With both, ministers, dispense the Lord's supper once, and sundry of the Burghers twice a year. Neither party *allow themselves*, in admitting to the sacraments, such as have no visible appearance of saintship, nor without examination into both their knowledge and character:—and gross ignorance of the Christian faith; neglect of secret and family worship; cursing or swearing in ordinary conversation, or even in passion; playing at cards or dice; idleness, or unnecessary labour or travel on the Lord's day; apparent hatred of others, or notour neglect of relative duties to them, or squabbling with them: drunkenness; promiscuous dancing; obscene language, or other apparent approaches to uncleanness; clandestine marriage*; fornication; dishonesty; smuggling; lying; reviling; and the like; are, with both, accounted scandals, sufficient to exclude one from the sacraments, till he, in a proper manner, profess his sorrow for his offence, and resolution to guard against the like for the future.—Their discipline is much the same, with what was once universally practised in the church of Scotland, but now almost generally disused. Hence sundry of the less conscientious Seceders, falling into scandal, return to the established church, that they may altogether avoid, or only receive a very slight censure.

* See above, p. 40,—44.

From a view of their agreement in so many points, impartial beholders can hardly fail to think, That, would both parties, with due earnestness, search out their own evils, and be affected therewith; would they seriously consider, what hurt their division, and vain jangling have done, and are like to do to the honour of Christ, the life of religion, and the souls of men; and how they will answer at his tribunal for their concern and hand therein; would they soberly consider, what Christ has done and doth to promote peace, and what he requires them to do; would both entirely lay aside their pride and prejudice, and often meet for mutual prayer, and Christian conference, especially on what they agree in, they would certainly, ere it was long, consign their censuring, division, and dry, or almost unintelligible disputes, to everlasting oblivion; and return, as brethren, to join together, in the fear and service of God.

But through mistake and prejudice, their differences, at present, seem at least to themselves, not inconsiderable. The Antiburghers still continue upon their quarrelled constitution of synod in Mr Gib's house, wherein about two fifths of the synod met by themselves, and assumed the whole power of it: they continue approving and praying for a blessing on the excommunication, and other censure, which they, while confessedly under scandal themselves, passed on their brethren, who never once acknowledge the authority of their *separate* courts. They contend, that the constitution of the revolution-church was Erastian, founded on the will of the civil magistrate, and inclinations of the people, and therefore can never lawfully be joined with. They contend, that their own religion is different from that professed in the established church, and authorised by the laws of this realm; but, though repeatedly called, have not hitherto marked out one *divine truth* professed by them, which is not contained in the publicly acknowledged standards of religion in the nation. They profess a very high veneration for their second testimony, as if it were one, if not a principal, standard; and they

reckon it no small crime to find fault, even with an historical expression thereof: but they renounce their ordination-vows, the first testimony, and the representations expressly adhered to in it, *in so far as these approve the constitution of the revolution-church, and the religion presently professed therein.* At licence, and at ordination, their candidates solemnly avow their approbation of the Associate Presbytery's declaration of principles against Mr Nairn, (in p. 50. of which, they thank God that the Seceders own religion has such SECURITY by the present civil government, as no nation on earth enjoys the like): and also declare, that they believe it sinful, inconsistent with their testimony, and bond, for any Seceder to swear to the *true religion presently professed and authorised in this realm*: at least, an indirect acknowledgment of the sinfulness of Seceders swearing the above-mentioned religious clause of some Burghers-oaths, is necessary, in order to a person's admission to sealing ordinances with them. For believing and affirming, That the true religion, presently professed and authorised in Scotland, was the same with that of the Seceders, and so safely sworn to by them; or, for insisting, That such as were of that mind, should not be excluded from the ministry, or seals of God's covenant, they separated from, deposed, and excommunicated their brethren. Public covenanting they reckon a very distinguished point of religion, and with great zeal instigate their people thereto; and represent the Burghers as very wicked for not doing the same: It is shrewdly alledged, however, that these covenanters are generally far from being sufficiently instructed and tried at their admission, and that very many of them understand very little of their covenant-bond, or acknowledgement of sins; and so are nothing bettered in practice, except in a distinguished conceit of their own covenanting, and a firm attachment to their party.

The Burghers having been the majority at the instant of the rupture, and keeping possession of the place and power of the synod, continue still upon that footing: Their brethren's withdrawalment, and constitution in Mr

Gib's house, they still account most unreasonable and absurd. Their above-mentioned deposition and delivery of them to Satan, with their fasting and prayer for the divine ratification thereof, they account a most fearful profanation of the name, and ordinance of Christ. But they never attempted to censure their brethren, as they saw no warrant from scripture to do so, while it was morally certain, it would not tend to general edification.—Had they any glimmering hope of success, they would even again supplicate their meeting with them, for prayer and conference, in order to promote the healing of the torn body of Christ. However far they allow the glory of the covenanting period between 1638 and 1650, to exceed that after 1689, they believe the constitution of the revolution-church to have been not *Eraastian*, but scriptural; and therefore lawfully joined with. And they intend to unite with the established judicatures, whenever they observe them earnestly reforming from the various and growing defections, introduced since the revolution. The covenants, and good acts of church or state, securing and establishing our standards, and what is contained therein, they reckon no articles of the true religion, professed and settled, but only human appearances, in favours thereof; and in this view they maintain the religion professed in the revolution-church, to have been the very same with that professed betwixt 1638 and 1650, though the human manner of professing and settling it, by sinful and fallible men, was in some respects different.—Since their standards of religion, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, are the very same, with these publicly espoused in the established church, they generally think, their religion is also the same with that of their brethren in the church; but they esteem their own manner of profession and adherence to it, to be more strict, and so think they ought to have the countenance of the civil rulers, rather than such who, contrary to solemn vows, practically tread the established standards under their feet.—Their *second* testimony they reckon no standard, but a judicial declaration in favours of the public standards of

reckon it no small crime to find fault, even with an historical expression thereof: but they renounce their ordination-vows, the first testimony, and the representations expressly adhered to in it, *in so far* as these approve the constitution of the revolution-church, and the religion presently professed therein. At licence, and at ordination, their candidates solemnly avow their approbation of the Associate Presbytery's declaration of principles against Mr Nairn, (in p. 50. of which, they thank God that the Seceders own religion has such SECURITY by the present civil government, as no nation on earth enjoys the like): and also declare, that they believe it sinful, inconsistent with their testimony, and bond, for any Seceder to swear to the *true religion presently professed and authorised in this realm*: at least, an indirect acknowledgment of the sinfulness of Seceders swearing the above-mentioned religious clause of some Burghers-oaths, is necessary, in order to a person's admission to sealing ordinances with them. For believing and affirming, That the true religion, presently professed and authorised in Scotland, was the same with that of the Seceders, and so safely sworn to by them; or, for insisting, That such as were of that mind, should not be excluded from the ministry, or seals of God's covenant, they separated from, deposed, and excommunicated their brethren. Public covenanting they reckon a very distinguished point of religion, and with great zeal instigate their people thereto; and represent the Burghers as very wicked for not doing the same: It is shrewdly alledged, however, that these covenanters are generally far from being sufficiently instructed and tried at their admission, and that very many of them understand very little of their covenant-bond, or acknowledgement of sins; and so are nothing bettered in practice, except in a distinguished conceit of their own covenanting, and a firm attachment to their party.

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the nation, and the truths therein contained. In its historical part, they grant a few ill-guarded expressions, and mistakes as to fact: Its assertory part, they profess to cleave to, without reserve.

Persuaded, that Christians, equally candid and single in their aims, and equally zealous for the truth and honour of God, may have different views of the disputed clause in the Burgess-oath, or of other human, nay, many divine, expressions; they abhor making either the approbation, or condemnation of that clause, a direct, or indirect term of church-fellowship with them: *Him that is weak*, or different from them *in his faith*, about this point, they cheerfully admit, even to the ministry; *but not to doubtful disputations*. — Public covenanting, when seasonable, done by persons only who *have knowledge and understanding*, and in *truth, judgment, and righteousness*, they heartily approve. The continued obligation of their ancestor's covenants, they boldly maintain: At ordinations, and other occasions, they solemnly declare their adherence thereto. But finding, from scripture, that it is not a standing, but occasional duty of religion, never, as it appears, promoted by godly David nor Solomon, during the eighty years of their reign; nor recommended as a then present duty by Christ or his apostles, during the more than forty years of their ministrations; knowing, that it is better not to vow, than to do it ignorantly, or without paying of vows, by a distinguished holy conversation; fearing the present broken and divided state of the godly, and of so remarkable restraint of spiritual influences, may not be altogether proper for it; finding, that besides some few inadvertent expressions, the Confession of Sins, published in 1744, and now used, by their Antiburgher brethren, is such as they could scarce hope to make the twentieth part of their hearers understand; and exceedingly stumbled at the manner in which this work is managed by their brethren; they have hitherto been afraid to proceed therein.

A Brief CHARACTER or VIEW of SECEDERS, drawn from the principal Decisions of their supreme Judicatures.

IT is necessarily incumbent upon all those, who profess to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, in an evil day,

1. Firmly to believe, earnestly maintain, and openly, in their profession and practice, bear witness for the truths of God revealed in his word; particularly such of them as are in danger of being murdered by opposition, poisoned by mixtures of error, or buried in careless oblivion, Prov. xxiii. 23. Psal. lxxviii. 3,—8. Deut. iv. 9. and vi. 6,—9. Isa. xxvi. 2. and xxxviii. 19. and lix. 13, 14, 15. Phil. iii. 16. and i. 27. 2 Thess. ii. 15. 1 Tim. vi. 20. 2 Tim. i. 13. and ii. 2. and iv. 7. Heb. ii. 1. 2 John 4. 3 John 3, 4. Jude 3. Rev. ii. 13, 25. and iii. 3, 10. 2 Pet. i. 12.

2. Thankfully to commemorate, and dutifully improve, the singular favours which God hath bestowed upon their church or nation; particularly, those by which he hath put or kept them in the possession of his oracles, ordinances, and eternal salvation, Psal. lxxviii. 1,—8. and cv, cvii, cxlv. and cvi. 1,—5, 13. Isa. lxiii. 7. Deut. xxvi. 1,—9. 1 Chron. xvi,

3. Mournfully to search out, confess, bewail, avoid, and practically testify against those steps of apostacy from once attained reformation, by which the truths of God have been injured, or his singular favours abused, Lev. xxvi. 40. 2 Chron. xxx. 22. Ezek. ix. 4, 6 and xvi, xx, xxii, xxiii. 2 Kings xvii. 7,—23. Psal. lxxviii. cvi. Isa. i, ii, v, xxviii, lix. Jer. ii,—xviii. with Exod. xx. 5. Mat. xxiii. 35. Eph. v. 7, 11. 1 Tim. v. 22.

Answerably hereto, they profess an hearty adherence to the Old and New Testament, as the only divine and infallible rule of faith and practice, 2 Tim. iii. 13,—16. Rev. xx. ii. 18, 19.; and to the Westminster Confession of Faith, Catechisms, and the Form of Presbyterian church-government, as founded on the word of God, 2 Tim. ii. 13.; and to the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League of Scotland, England, and Ireland, as reli-

gious vows, whereby they are solemnly engaged to the belief and practice of whatever is authorized by the word of God, and is therefrom deduced into said Confession of Faith, Catechisms, Directory for worship, and Form of church-government, Psal. lxxvii. 11. and cxix. 106. Pro. xx. 25. Deut. xxix. 1,—25. and xxxi. 20. Jer. l. 5,—9.

As they consider themselves bound to contend earnestly for the faith, once delivered to the saints; to keep the word of Christ's patience, and be established in the present truth, Jude 3. Rev. iii. 10. 2 Pet. i. 12. Eph. iv. 14. Prov. xxiii. 23.: They, in opposition to the errors presently rampant, in the land, particularly maintain,

1. That Jesus Christ, is the supreme and only true God, of the same substance and dignity with his eternal Father, Rom. ix. 5. Tit. ii. 13. John x. 30. Phil. ii. 6.

2. That God, from all eternity, decreed whatsoever comes to pass, Acts v. 18. Eph. i. 11.

3. That God, of his mere good pleasure, without any regard to their future piety, as the moving cause, from all eternity elected a certain, but the smallest, number of mankind, to everlasting life, Eph. i. 3,—6. Mat. xx. 16. Luke xii. 32.

4. That God entered into a covenant with Adam, as the representative of all his natural posterity; in which he promised him and them life temporal, spiritual, and eternal, upon condition of his perfect obedience; and denounced the contrary death, in case of the smallest disobedience, Gal. iii. 12. Mat. xix. 17. Gal. iv. 24. Hof. vi. 7.

5. That through his breach of that covenant, in his eating of the forbidden fruit, all men are conceived and born in sin, able to do nothing spiritually good, but are children of disobedience and wrath, Rom. v. 12,—20. and viii. 3, 7, 8 Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3, 8.

6. That no light of nature, but the scripture alone, is sufficient to conduct fallen men to true and everlasting happiness, Acts xiv. 15, 16. and xvii. 30. Prov. xxix. 18 Eph. ii. 12. 2 John 9. Col. i. 26, 27. 1 Cor. i. 20,—24.

7. That in order to redeem men from an everlasting state of sin and misery, and bring them to everlasting sal-

vation, Christ, the only begotten Son of God, assumed our nature, and for ever continues to be true God and true man, in two distinct natures, and one person, Heb. ii. 8,—16. Rom. viii. 3. Psal. ii. 6,—11. Isa. vii. 14. and ix. 6. Rom. ix. 5. and i. 3, 4.

8. That he, as our Surety, in the covenant of grace, from all eternity, undertook for all the elect, and them only, and in the fulness of time performed to the broken law, and offended justice of God, whatever obedience and satisfaction could have been required of us, Jer. xxx. 21. Psal. xl. 6,—8. Isa. liii. and xlii. 21. Rom. v. 15,—21. and viii. 3, 4. 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iv. 4, 5. and iii. 13. Heb. x. 10,—14. 1 Pet. ii. 24. and iii. 18.

9. That his Surety-righteousness, imputed to us by God, and not any thing wrought in, or done by us, is the foundation of our pardon of sin, acceptance with God, and title to eternal life, Rom. v. 15, 21. Phil. iii. 9. Isa. lxiv. 6. and xlv. 24, 25. and lxi. 10. and lii. 5, 11. and liv. 17. Isa. lxiv. 17. Jer. xxiii. 6. Dan. ix. 24.

10. That though God hath not fixed any necessary and infallible connection between the natural endeavours of unregenerate men, and his bestowing of saving grace upon them, yet it is their indispensable duty, carefully to attend the ordinances of the gospel, as means appointed of God, for the effectual conveyance of his Spirit and grace, Psal. xxxiv. 11. Prov. viii. 34. Acts viii. 33. Isa. lv. 3. Mat. vii. 14. Luke xiii. 21, 14.

11. That though Jesus Christ laid down his life for the elect only, yet, in the gospel, he, and his complete righteousness, and everlasting salvation, are freely offered to all sinful men who hear it, so as each may warrantably receive him, his righteousness and salvation, to himself in particular, Prov. i. 22, 23, 24. and viii. 4. and ix. 4, 5. Isa. lv. 1,—7. and xlvi. 12, 13. and xlv. 22. John vi. 37. Mat. xi. 28. Rev. xxii. 17.

12. That in consequence hereof, there is, in the very nature of faith, a real appropriation of Christ, his righteousness and salvation, as in the gospel freely given of God to one's self in particular, John xx. 28. Jer. xxiii. 6. Isa. xlv. 24, 25. Zech. xiii. 9. Acts xv. 11. Gal. ii. 16, 20. 1 Cor. i. 30. 2 Cor. v. 21.

13. That all believers, through their union to Christ, as the Lord their righteousness, who fulfilled the moral law as a covenant for them, are fully and irrevocably delivered from the law, in that covenant form, so as they can neither be justified or condemned, on account of their own works; yet, they are for ever under that as a binding rule of life, established by JEHOVAH their Creator and Redeemer, Rom. vi. and vii. 4. Gal. ii. 19. and iii. 13. and iv. 4, 5. 1 Cor. ix. 21. Luke i. 74, 75. Tit. ii. 11, 12, 13.

14. That there can be no true turning from sin before coming to, and uniting with Christ; nor ought we to attempt it, in order to pave our way, or to recommend ourselves to him; but as utterly ignorant, guilty, polluted, weak, and enslaved in ourselves, we ought to receive him as made of God to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that he may save and turn us from our sins, John xv. 5. Rom. viii. 7, 8. Mat. i. 21. and xviii. 11. Rom. xi. 26. Acts v. 31. Jer. xxxi. 18, 19, 20.

15. That the gospel, properly taken, is no new law, requiring of men, faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, as the proper conditions of their salvation; but is God's infinitely gracious declaration, in which he manifests, gives, and offers to us, as sinful men, Christ, his righteousness and salvation, freely, without money, and without price, Luke ii. 10, 11. Isa. xlii. 1,—7. and lxi. 1, 2, 3. and lv. 1,—7. 1 Tim. i. 15. Rev. xxii. 17. John vii. 37, 38.

16. That gospel-holiness is at once, a distinguished privilege, a principal part of salvation, and an indispensable duty, and necessary preparation for celestial happiness; but is not a proper condition of our title to, or possession of it, 1 Thess. v. 23. 1 Cor. i. 30. 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. Heb. xii. 14. 1 Cor. xv. 58. Phil. iii. 9. Tit. iii. 5,—7. Rom. xi. 6. and v. 21. and vi. 23.

17. That believers being perfectly freed from the law, as a covenant of works, no slavish fear of falling into hell by their daily sins, or hopes of procuring heaven by their good works, ought to influence their obedience,

but they ought always to act as united to Christ, and interested in his everlasting righteousness and salvation, Rom. v. 15, — 21. with chap. vi. and vii. 4. Tit. ii. 11,—14. Psal. cxvi. 16. and cxix. 32. 1 John iv. 19.

18. That God needs nothing from, nor can be profited by any creature; and so can only reward their good works of his own free will and bounty, Job xxii. 2,—4. and xxv. 7. Luke xvii. 10.

19. That not self love, interest, or pleasure, but the law of God is the sole standard by which the goodness of actions, religious and moral, is to be estimated and adjusted; and not self-love, but proper views of the excellencies of God, as our God in Christ, and a regard to his authority, ought to be the leading motives of our obedience to him, Mat. xvi. 24. Deut. xii. 33. Exod. xx. 2,—7. Tit. ii. 11,—14.

20. That believers can neither totally or finally fall from the state of grace, or hold Jesus Christ for a downright impostor, Jer. xxxii. 39, 40. Job xvii. 9. Prov. iv. 18. 1 Pet. i. 5. John iv. and vi. 40, 54. and x. 28, 29. and xiv. 19.

21. That Jesus Christ ALONE is the King and Head of his church, having power to appoint her laws, ordinances, and offices; and to whome ONLY, her officers are subject in all their spiritual ministrations, Psal. ii. 7. Isa. ix. 6, 7. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. Mat. xvi. 18, 19. and xxiii. 8,—10. and xxviii. 18,—20. Heb xiii. 17. 1 Pet. v. 4.

22. That Christ, in the New Testament, hath prescribed a particular form of church-government, distinct from, and independent on the civil magistracy; which is the Presbyterian, and no other,—to continue unalterable, till the end of the world, John xviii. 36. Mat. xvi. 18, 19. and xviii. 15,—20. and xx. 25,—27. and xxvi. 26,—29. and xxviii. 18, 19, 20. John xx. 21, 22, 23. Acts i. — xx. Rom. xii. 4,—8. 1 Cor. iii. — xiv. 2 Cor. ii. 1,—8. Epistles to Timothy and Titus almost throughout, &c. &c.

23. That Christ hath not intrusted the power of church-government to magistrates, lordly bishops, or to believers in general; but to spiritual officers, pastors, el-

ders, and deacons, appointed by himself,—who have full power and warrant from him to hold spiritual courts in his name,—sessions, presbyteries, and synods, when necessary ;—but whose whole management must be regulated by his laws, prescribed in his word, 1 Cor. xii. 28. Eph. iv. 11, — 14. 1 Thess. v. 12. 1 Tim. v. 17. Acts vi. 1,—9. Mat. xviii. 15,—20. and xvi. 19. 1 Tim. iv. 14. Acts xv. Heb. xiii. 17. 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2. &c. &c.

24. That Christ's kingdom, being of a spiritual nature, her officers ought to be elected to their office by persons in full communion with her in all her sealing ordinances ; no person's vote being preferred on any secular account, 1 John iv. 1. Acts i. 15,—26. and vi. 1,—6. and xiv. 23.

The Seceders also profess, thankfully to commemorate and dutifully improve the singular favours of God, which he hath bestowed upon this church and land, and by which he hath put or kept us in possession of his oracles, ordinances, or other spiritual blessings ; such as,

1. That notwithstanding our fathers savage ignorance and barbarity, and their great distance from Jerusalem, the gospel of peace and salvation was, perhaps, within about forty years after our Redeemer's ascension, early introduced into our Island, in fulfilment of his many precious promises, concerning the ends of the earth, and isles of the sea.

2. That notwithstanding all the united force and fraud of the Popish clergy, and of the courts of Scotland and France, the Protestant Reformation was, with great regularity, introduced into our country ; and by manifold faithful wrestlings, against the rage of Papists, treachery of professed Protestants, and poverty and distress of ministers, carried on to a further degree of purity, than in any other Protestant church.

3. That, as during the darkness and bondage of Popery, he had still given power to some in our land to witness for him, clothed in sackcloth ; so, under the fearful apostacies, profaneness, and persecutions, between 1600 and 1637, and between 1660, and 1688, he had preserved for himself, a number of faithful witnesses for

his injured truths; afforded them singular measures of his Spirit and presence, and honoured them to win many souls to Christ.

4. That when archbishop Laud, and our profligate bishops, assisted by King Charles I. and his courtiers, had reduced our church and nation to the brink of Popery and slavery, the Lord wrought such a deliverance and reformation in 1638, as astonished every serious beholder, and confounded his enemies; and by the struggles and prayers of the then faithful managers, laid the foundation of these civil and religious privileges, which we now enjoy.

5. That at the Revolution in 1688, when our watchmen in both church and state were remarkably asleep, he redeemed us out of the very jaws of Popery and slavery, if not also of a bloody massacre; and that by means of our tyrant's own Son-in-law, assisted by a train of almost miraculous providences,—he re-established our religion and liberties, though not altogether in the former glorious manner.

6. That when queen Anne, and her courtiers, had ripened their scheme for introducing a Popish pretender, to the overthrow of our religion and liberties, the Lord, by her seasonable death,—by the defeat of the rebels in 1715, as well as in 1745, and by the establishment of the family of Hanover on the British throne, hath preserved for us the enjoyment of our religion and liberties.

7. That when Arminian, Arian, and other errors, attended by outrageous ecclesiastical tyranny, threatened the ruin of religion in our land, the Lord gave us a little reviving in our bondage, in the rise of the Secession 1733.; by means of which, however sinfully mismanaged, by both ministers and people, the doctrines of the gospel have been not a little made known, and probably the corrupt party in the church somewhat restrained from their error or wickedness.

8. That on several occasions, the Lord enabled our ancestors, solemnly to infect themselves and their posterity in the grant which he had made to his Son, CHRIST,

of the isles, and utmost ends of the earth for his possession, and on several occasions to dedicate themselves and their seed to his honourable service; and countenanced them in so doing, not only in external smiles of providence, but by such remarkable out-pouring of his Spirit, for the conviction, conversion, and reformation of men, as hath not been known in any period of the Christian church, since the apostolic age.

Reckoning themselves commanded of God, to mourn over their own iniquities, and the iniquities of their fathers and neighbours, they, in consequence of the above adherence, renounce every thing contrary thereto, whether in principle, or practice, and profess to lament over the prevalency thereof, as a ground of the Lord's controversy with this church and nation. The errors they, according to their knowledge, condemn, are principally the Socinian, Arian, Arminian, Popish, Prelatic, and Sectarian.—Among the practical backslidings from the once attained-to, and covenanted work of reformation, which have happened in the preceding and present age, as abuses of the above-mentioned, or like singular favours of God they enumerate,

1. The re-admission of wicked malignants to places of civil power and trust, in order to assist K. Charles II. against Cromwell and his party.

2. Cromwell's toleration of manifold errors and heresies.

3. The restoration of K. Charles to his power in 1660, without requiring any security for his governing the nation according to the good laws thereof.

4. The parliament's disannulling all the laws which had been made between 1638 and 1650, in favours of a covenanted work of reformation, or the good order of the nation.

5. Their establishing the king's supremacy, or spiritual headship, over the church.

6. Their declaring of the national covenant, as explained to abjure Prelacy, and the articles of Perth, and the solemn league, to be unlawful oaths, and not binding on the swearers and subscribers thereof. Their re-

quiring the subjects solemnly to renounce them, and making it treasonable to GIVE, TAKE, SPEAK, or WRITE, in defence of them; together with the public burning of these solemn covenants with God, at Lialithgow and Edinburgh.

7. The restoration of Prelacy, after it had been found contrary to the word of God, and repeatedly abjured in solemn covenants:—Ministers and others neglect to give proper testimony against the introduction thereof; and too general compliance therewith; and the terrible persecution of such as faithfully opposed it.

8. The obliging of the subjects, by manifold oaths and declarations, to approve the various iniquities of that persecuting period.

9. K. Charles II.'s Indulgencies of Presbyterian ministers to exercise their office, which flowed from his blasphemous claim to ecclesiastical supremacy; and were clogged with several sinful restrictions; and K. James VII.'s unlimited toleration, founded in his claim to absolute power, and plainly intended for the introduction of Popery, and Presbyterian ministers thankful acceptance of the same.

10. That the Revolution parliament did not revive the legal securities given to a covenanted reformation, between 1638 and 1650; but even left some bad laws at least not plainly rescinded.

11. That they did not duly resent the heaven-daring injuries which had been done to the national covenant and solemn league, nor abolish Prelacy, as contrary to the word of God, and these covenants.

12. That in the union settlement 1707, the parliament, in manifest contradiction to the covenants, and the belief of the divine right of Presbytery, not only consented to, but *actually confirmed* the perpetual establishment of Prelacy, and the ceremonies in England.

13. The British parliament restored patronage, and the superstitious Yule vacance; established a toleration of Prelacy, and every other form of religion in Scotland, only Popery and blasphemy excepted; and have repealed the penal statutes against witchcraft.

14. That they imposed the abjuration oath upon mi-

nisters and others; and in an Erastian manner, required the Scotch ministers to read from their pulpit, on the Lord's day, in the time of divine worship, a civil proclamation relative to captain Porteous, under pain of seclusion from sitting in Presbytery.

15. That the Presbyterian Clergy, at the Revolution, did not more plainly mourn over, and testify against the horrid branches of apostacy in the preceding persecuting period; and did not more readily and solemnly assert the sole headship of Christ over his church, the divine right of Presbyterian government, and the intrinsic power of the church, which had been so daringly denied and renounced in the preceding period. Nay, did themselves too readily dissolve or prorogue their general assemblies, in obedience to the Erastian requirements of K. William and Q. Anne.

16. That instead of being duly censured, many who had plainly perjured themselves in their compliance with, Prelacy, and in taking the impious oaths and bonds, and even in persecuting the Lord's people, were admitted to church-fellowship, nay, to the office of elders or ministers, without proper tokens of repentance.

17. That the bulk of the ministry, to the no small offence of the godly, and renting of the church, complied with the Erastian and sinful orders of the parliament, relative to the adjuration oath, and proclamation concerning captain Porteous.

18. That in their rage against the *Marrow of modern divinity*, the assembly condemned a variety of precious gospel truths; but have slightly censured, and more frequently screened from censure, such as have been pannelled at their bar for Arian, Arminian, or other errors; and have refused to assert the truth, in express opposition thereto.

19. Their violent and habitual promoting patronage, and intrusion of ministers, ordinarily very unfit for the office; and persecuting of such as faithfully oppose it*.

* See these truths, mercies, and steps of apostacy, more fully represented in the *Re-exhibition of the Seceder's Testimonies*; particularly, the second Testimony; and in that most excellent Act, concerning the doctrine of grace, &c. and several church histories.

These things, together with the so frequent repetition of oaths, relative to allegiance and trade; receiving of the Lord's supper in the English manner, as a test of loyalty; swearing, by touching and kissing the gospels; repeated rebellion of a malignant party against our lawful Sovereigns of the family of Hanover, in favours of a Popish pretender; abounding ignorance of the Christian doctrines; neglect of God's worship in public, private, or secret; profane cursing and swearing in common discourse; open violation of the Sabbath; notorious neglect of relative duties; admission of insufficient and wicked persons to offices in church and state, or to the seals of God's covenant; drunkenness and bribery, deceit and profane swearing in the election of magistrates, or even of ministers; abounding murder, uncleanness, luxury, theft, smuggling, stage-plays; games at cards and dice; lying; reviling; backbiting, and covetousness, — they profess to detest and also mourn over, as cause of the Lord's wrath still standing against the generation. But it is not to be imagined, that every one hath an equal clear view of all these evils, particularly such as relate to former times; nor that every one hath the same view of the sinfulness of each of these facts.

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